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Planned Parenthood
Federation of America, Inc.

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PUBLIC ATTITUDES ABOUT SEX EDUCATION, FAMILY PLANNING, AND ABORTION IN THE UNITED STATES

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INTRODUCTION

This year in the United States more than 1 million women below the age of 20 will become pregnant. Teenage pregnancy rates in the United States are more than two times higher than in Canada, England, and France, nearly three times higher than in Sweden, and seven times higher than in the Netherlands, according to a study published in 1985 by The Alan Guttmacher Institute.[1] Both birthrates and abortion rates are much higher in the United States than in the other countries studied -- and the greatest relative difference in birthrates is between girls under age 15 in the United States and the other countries.

It has been suggested that the teenage pregnancy rate among black American teenagers drives the pregnancy rate in this country far above that of other Western, industrialized nations. The Guttmacher inter-country study shows that the teenage pregnancy rate is much higher among blacks than among whites in the United States. But the study also reports that the white teenage pregnancy rate is still much higher here than in the European countries studied.

Teenage pregnancy pervades our society. It is a tragedy that all Americans must recognize. Parents, schools, the media, and local and national leaders must work together to teach teenagers what must be done to avoid becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy.

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[1]Elise F. Jones, "Teenage Pregnancy in Developed Countries: Determinants and Policy Implications," Family Planning Perspectives, 17:53, March/April 1985.

The purpose of this survey is to examine what Americans think that families, schools, the media, and society in general should do to achieve this goal. The survey also examines public attitudes about abortion, which has risen at a great rate in the past decade.

Specifically, the survey provides:

-- Measures of what Americans feel parents must do to prevent their children from either becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy.

-- Measures of the percentage of adults who have discussed sex and birth control with their children.

-- Trended measures of public support for and opposition to the proposed law to prohibit family planning clinics from giving contraceptives to those aged 17 and under, unless their parents grant permission.

-- Measures of public support for television to present information about birth control in its programming.

-- Measures of public support for sex education in schools and, for the first time, a measure of support for policy changes which would require schools to establish links with family planning clinics, so that teenagers can learn about and obtain contraceptives.

-- Trended measures of support for and opposition to a constitutional amendment to ban abortion, and the 1973 Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion nationwide.

-- The proportion of adults who know someone who has had an abortion.

-- Measures of agreement and disagreement with key arguments for and against abortion, and a composite measure of these attitudes classified into three groups: the hardcore pro-abortion group, the swing group, and the hardcore anti-abortion group.

This survey is based on 2,510 interviews with two cross-sections of adults nationwide. All interviewing was conducted by telephone between August 13-25, 1985, and September 13-17, 1985. Every household with a telephone had an equal chance of being drawn into the samples. The detailed survey methodology, including information on the statistical reliability of the samples, is provided in the Methodological Appendix.

Notes on Reading the Tables

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (-) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding, multiple answers from respondents, or the elimination of "no answers."

Public Release of the Survey Findings

All Louis Harris and Associates surveys are designed to adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Because data from this survey will be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is also available, rather than simply an excerpt from the survey findings.

Project Responsibility

The director of this project at Louis Harris and Associates was Louis Harris, Chairman. The chief analyst was Stuart Leichenko, Research Associate. He worked under the supervision of Michael R. Kagay, Ph.D., Vice President and Division Head.

Louis Harris and Associates would like to thank the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., for sponsoring this research. We would in particular like to thank Douglas Gould, Vice President for Communications, for his valuable contributions during the development of the questionnaire. However, responsibility for topics, question wordings, the findings, and for their interpretation rests solely with Louis Harris and Associates.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

This summary provides an overview of the results of the survey. Many findings described in the body of the report do not appear in this summary. Readers are urged to examine the body of the report to understand the full findings of this survey.

Public Attitudes About Teenage Pregnancy, Sex Education, and Contraception

1. The number of teenage pregnancies is considered by an overwhelming majority of the American public to be a serious problem in the United States. Eighty-four percent of adults agree that the number of teenage pregnancies is a serious problem, and this recognition is widespread throughout all social groups in society.

2. Most adults feel that parents have little or no control over their teenagers' sexual activity. Sixty-four percent see parents as having not too much control or no control at all.

3. The consensus among adults is that open communication about sex education and birth control are two key things that parents should do to alleviate the problem of teenage pregnancy. Thirty-five percent volunteer communication and education as the most important things parents should do to help prevent their teenage children from becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy; 17% say that explaining birth control is the best approach; 13% say that explaining the causes of pregnancy and the risks of sex is the answer; and 12% say that teaching the right values is the main thing parents can do. Note that pragmatism supersedes moralism when people are asked what can realistically be done to decrease the rate of teenage pregnancy.

4. In the past, however, an open and timely discussion of sex between parents and children seems to have been the exception rather than the rule. Only one quarter of adults recall that they originally learned about sex from their mother (21%) or their father (5%). Most say that friends (40%) or sexual partners (10%) first taught them about sex.

5. Today's adults appear to be changing this situation with their own children. Seventy-six percent of adults who have children aged 6-18 in their household say that an adult has talked with the children about sex. The median age of the child at the first discussion was 10.2 years.

6. However, the topic of birth control is not often included in such parent-child discussions about sex. Only 33% of adults say that birth control was part of the discussion. This low proportion suggests that these discussions about sex may not in practice resemble the models of frank, informative communication called for by the public.

7. Many parents seem to feel that they need outside help when it comes to informing their children about birth control, and yet many also wish to retain some control over what their children learn and do. Thus, they are deeply split over the proposal for the so-called "squeal law," which would prohibit family planning clinics from giving contraceptives to people under age 18 without written permission from their parents. Forty-eight percent of adults favor such a proposed law, while 47% oppose it. In past Harris surveys, majorities have always opposed the proposed "squeal law," so the close division of opinion now represents a tightening of the controversy over this topic. Not only is the public split on the issue; we believe that many individual parents also have divided feelings and are torn between the desire to retain some control over their children's sexual activities, on one hand,

and the sobering reality that parents have little control, and need help, on the other.

8. As much as they might want to assert control, a majority of adults admit that making contraceptives more difficult for teenagers to obtain would cause more teenage pregnancies. Fifty-three percent foresee more pregnancies as a result, 18% see fewer pregnancies, while 29% think it would have no effect.

9. A majority of adults also think that more open discussion of sexual topics in society would lead to fewer teenage pregnancies. Sixty-two percent think fewer pregnancies would be the result; 9% believe that more pregnancies would result, and 29% say that more open discussion would have no effect.

10. Most Americans are critical of television, one of the most effective means of reaching the nation with a discussion of any subject or issue. A majority (68%) think that television gives an exaggerated picture of people making love. And majorities or strong pluralities think that television fails to deal at all with pregnancy and the consequences of sex (45%), family planning to prevent pregnancy (68%), and information about sexually transmitted diseases (63%).

11. There is a public mandate for television to deal more realistically with the subjects of sex and birth control. Nearly 8 in 10 adults (78%) think that television should present messages about birth control as part of its programming.

12. Americans look to science and research for part of the answer. Seventy-six percent think it is very or somewhat likely in the next 5 years that there will be a breakthrough that will produce a new and more effective contraceptive.

13. But parents admit that they need help now, and they look to the schools for assistance: adults overwhelmingly support sex education in the schools. Eighty-five percent agree that sex education should be taught in public schools.

14. But just a bare majority (53%) think that sex education is available now in most public schools.

15. Adults believe that eliminating sex education in schools would have negative consequences. Fifty-four percent of adults believe that eliminating sex education in schools would lead to more teenage pregnancies.

16. A substantial 2-to-1 majority of adults (67%) favor requiring public schools to establish links with family planning clinics, so that teenagers can learn about contraceptives and obtain them. The strength of support for this policy change provides evidence of a mandate for a type of candid and practical sex education which not only informs students about contraceptives but channels sexually active students to ready sources of contraception.

Public Attitudes on Abortion

1. A majority of adults nationwide oppose a constitutional ban on abortion. Thirty-seven percent favor such a ban, while 55% oppose it.

2. This is down slightly from a larger 58%-33% majority who opposed such a ban in mid-1984. But a solid majority have consistently opposed the ban since the Harris firm first began asking about it.

3. Solid majorities would also oppose a ban on abortion under eight different possible conditions. This opposition to a ban varies between 52% and 73%, according to the circumstances involved. Large majorities of around 7 in 10 oppose a ban when a woman's life or physical health would be in danger

from the pregnancy, or when a pregnancy results from rape or incest. Smaller majorities of 52% or 53% oppose a ban on abortion when only social or economic circumstances are involved, such as when a woman would have to go on welfare if she had the child, or when a child would be unwanted or unloved. The striking fact is that once the negative human consequences of a particular pregnancy are pointed out to Americans, their tolerance for allowing abortions rises rapidly to sizable majority proportions.

4. Support for the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision (Roe vs. Wade) that legalized abortion now stands at 50% in favor and 47% opposed. Harris surveys have consistently found at least 50% of the public in favor of the court decision in the 12 years that opinion on the subject has been tracked.

5. However, opinion on the historic decision has narrowed in the past year. In January, 1985 a more substantial 56-42% majority favored the decision. Analysis of the groups that have shifted the most reveals that the narrowed margin is in part attributable to an intensification of opposition in the South, especially among those who are followers of white Moral Majority preachers, and to a resurgence of opposition among the elderly, who were the last group to support the Court position in the late 1970s.

6. Few Americans believe that abortion will ever be outlawed again. Seventy-four percent think that abortion will remain legal, while only 19% believe it will be outlawed again. In the minds of most Americans, the battle concerning legality is over.

7. Half of all adults in the U.S. now say that they know someone who has had an abortion, and nearly three in 10 of all adults say they know someone close to them who has had an abortion. This means that, increasingly, public opinion on abortion stems from actual experience with, or exposure to, abortion, as well as from people's beliefs.

8. A clear majority (58%) reject the notion that abortion is an immoral act. Thirty-seven percent think abortion is immoral, 8% think that abortion is moral, while 50% say it is not a question of morality. However, 6 out of 10 white born-again Christians say abortion is immoral.

9. Forty-two percent of adults say they have read about, heard about, or seen the film "The Silent Scream." Fourteen percent of adults say they have actually viewed the film. Although this is a small minority of the public, it represents 20 million Americans who claim to have seen part or all of the film.

10. Of those who say they have seen "The Silent Scream", 45% say it made them more opposed to abortion. This means that as many as 6% of all adults might have become more opposed to abortion as a result of seeing "The Silent Scream." However, it cannot be determined how many of these people were already disposed against abortion even before seeing the film.

11. A majority of those who saw the film (56%) also say that it was biased. Thirty-nine percent say it was mostly objective.

12. The number of hardcore pro-abortion people (30%) in this country is about half again the size of the hardcore anti-abortion group (21%). However, 49% of the public have less consistent views and see merit in at least some of the arguments of each side in the debate over abortion. The swing group can join either of the two hardcore groups, depending on the issue, to form a majority. They are the critical balance. This results from an analysis of four key arguments -- two pro and two con -- often encountered in debates over abortion.

13. Groups tending to be disproportionately pro-abortion include those with college educations, higher income groups, and liberals.

14. Groups tending to be disproportionately anti-abortion include those who did not finish high school, Catholics, white born-again Christians, and conservatives.

15. A majority of blacks (60%) are in the swing group, but the remaining 40% are three times as likely to be pro-abortion as anti-abortion.

Public Support for U.S. Aid for Overseas Birth Control Programs

1. In regard to the situation in developing countries, the American public overwhelmingly favors the U.S. helping with birth control. Even when the developing country runs abortion programs, a near 2 to 1 majority of Americans still favor the U.S. helping with birth control, though support drops off a bit in this instance. Seventy-eight percent favor the U.S. helping with birth control in developing nations. The size of the majority drops to 61% when a developing country also runs abortion programs. One possible reason for such strong support for birth control programs overseas is that 68% of the American public believe that overpopulation is a major cause of food shortages.

CHAPTER 1: THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN SEX EDUCATION AND PREVENTING TEENAGE PREGNANCY

This Harris survey began by asking Americans aged 18 and over if they thought that the number of teenage pregnancies in this country is a serious problem, or not so serious a problem. Eighty-four percent of adults aged 18 and over say that teenage pregnancies in the United States are a serious problem. Only 11% feel that teenage pregnancies are not a serious problem, and 5% are not sure.

The results of the survey reveal that significantly more women (88%) than men (80%) believe that teenage pregnancies are a serious problem. And a ten-point gap separates white born-again Christians' and Catholics' perceptions about the problem of teenage pregnancy -- 89% of white born-again Christians feel that teenage pregnancy is a serious problem, compared to 79% of Catholics. But it is the size of both these majorities, and not the differences, which demonstrate recognition of the seriousness of this problem throughout the United States.

The Role of the Family in Preventing Teenage Pregnancy

The survey next asked for people's impression of how much control parents have over their teenage children's sexual activity, and what parents should do to help prevent their teenagers from either becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy.

A substantial majority of all adults believe that parents have little or no control at all over their teenagers' sexual activity. Sixty-four percent of adults believe that parents have not too much or no control at all

over their teenagers' sexual activity, compared to 35% who believe that parents have at least some control (Tables 2 and 3).

Among the various demographic groups, the proportions who say that parents have at least some control over their teenagers' sexual activity differ by as much as 15 percentage points. For example, 46% of adults who have at least a bachelor's degree say that parents have at least some control, compared to only 31% of adults who never finished high school. A smaller proportion of blacks (29%) than whites (35%) or Hispanics (37%) feel that parents have at least some control.

Observation:

It should be emphasized that none of these differences contradicts the overall finding that only about one-third of American adults feel that parents have any control over their teenagers' sexual activity.

What, then, is the most important thing that parents should do to prevent their teenagers from either becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy? In response to this open-ended question, 35% volunteered that communication and education are the most important things parents should do, 17% that parents should explain contraceptive methods, and 13% that parents should explain the risks and possible consequences of having sex or becoming pregnant (Tables 4 and 5). Nine percent believe that more discipline and control of children is what parents should do, 5% that the most important thing parents should do is to give their teenage children contraceptives, and 2% that parents should teach their children not to have sex before marriage.

Observation:

The open-ended responses to this question offer a virtual consensus of public opinion on the need for open, frank

discussion of sexuality and birth control between parents and their children. However, the next findings suggest that this has not been the experience of most American adults.

Where People First Learned About Sex

Only one quarter (26%) of adults in this country say that they learned about sex from either their mother (21%) or father (5%). This proportion drops to 18% among males and rises to 34% among females. These proportions vary little by either education or race. A plurality of people in each educational groups shown in Table 6, as well as pluralities of whites, blacks and Hispanics, say that they first learned about sex from their friends.

Among 18-24 year-olds the proportion who say they learned about sex from their friends drops to 34%. A larger proportion of this age group and of 25-29 year-olds than in the population as a whole say they learned about sex in sex education courses. But as in the population as a whole, about one-quarter or less of people in these age-groups say they first learned about sex from their mother or father.

Observations:

1. Clearly, these results show that an open, timely discussion of sex between parents and their children has been an exceptional experience for American adults, and one which the public plainly feels ought to happen to more than the present one in four Americans.

2. It is possible that some people who said they learned about sex from friends defined a sexual partner as a friend. Pooling these two categories reveals that half (50%) of all American adults learned about sex from "friends" or sexual partners.

Sex Education in Today's Families

Tables 7 and 8 reveal that this pattern may be changing among families which have children in elementary or secondary school. Seventy-six percent of adults who have children aged 6-18 living in their household say that an adult has talked with the children about sex. Fewer blacks (65%) and Hispanics (70%) than whites (79%) have talked with their children about sex. There are also differences by education: 71% of those with less than a high school education have talked about sex with their children, compared to 81% of those with some college education or a bachelor's degrees. And only two-thirds (65%) of Catholics have discussed sex with their children.

Fourteen percent of this whole group say the children were under six years old when an adult first discussed sex with them, 28% say the children were 6-9 years old, 36% say the children were 10-12 years old, and 16% say the children were 13 years or older. The median age when sex was first discussed with children in these households was 10.2 years old.

But when asked if these discussions between parents or adults and children included a discussion of birth control, only a minority of 33% replied that they had (Table 9).

Observation:

The results of these three questions provide evidence of an emerging generational difference between the behavior and attitudes of yesterday's and today's parents toward educating their children about sex. Unfortunately, the low proportion of adults who have talked to their children about birth control suggests that discussions about sex may not in practice resemble the models of open, informative, frank communication called for by the public in Table 3. It may well be true that parents' discussions of sex with their children also neglected a great many topics -- so many that some children may not have even considered the talk a discussion about sex.

Public Feelings About the Proposed Law to Prohibit Family Planning Clinics From Giving Contraceptives to Teenagers Unless Their Parents Give Permission

In recent years various groups have lobbied for passage of a federal law which would prohibit family planning clinics from giving contraceptives to people aged 17 and under unless they had written permission from their parents -- the so called "squeal law." Proponents of the law claim that parents should have the right to decide if their children obtain contraceptives from clinics, as is the policy with some physicians. They also say that the availability of contraceptives encourages teenage promiscuity. Opponents of the law argue that fear and embarrassment would prevent many teenagers from asking for their parents' consent. The result, say those opposed to the proposed law, would be more teenagers having sex without birth control and more teenage pregnancies.

Harris surveys have measured public opinion toward this law since it was first proposed. Until now a majority of adults aged 18 and over have opposed such a law. But the majorities have never been large, and substantial minorities have supported the law each time a Harris survey asked about it. In effect, the public has been split about this law, with those opposed numbering a slight majority. When the question was last asked, in March 1984, the results were representative of the general pattern: 44% favored the law, 53% opposed it, and 3% were not sure about it (Table 10).

The results of this latest survey show that opposition to this law has dropped five points since March 1984 to 47% of the public, and that support has climbed 4 points to 48%. Thus the public is now divided evenly in favor of and against a law which would prohibit teenagers from obtaining contraceptives from family planning clinics unless they had written permission from their parents.

As Table 10 shows, majorities of a number of groups favor the law, including: adults who have children aged 6-18 living in their household, those with a high school education or less, blacks and Hispanics, white born-again Christians, conservatives, Republicans, and people aged 65 and over. Most of these, and many other demographic groups, have shifted more in favor of this law since March 1984. The most dramatic shift has been in the West, where the proportion favoring this law has risen from 36% to 49%. Even among self-described liberals, who still oppose the law by a 55% majority, the proportion in favor has risen five points to 42%.

Other groups in which a majority still oppose passage of this law include: those with some college education or a bachelor's degree, those who have never married, those with a middle-of-the-road political philosophy, independents, those aged 18-29, Easterners, and people living in central urban areas.

Observation:

Public opinion is deeply split on the so-called "squeal law." The desire to know more about teenagers' sexual activity and to have more control over it is checked by a realization that teenagers should receive proper advice about birth control and how to avoid pregnancy. The bottom line, however: no real mandate for a "squeal law."

Whether Making Contraceptives Harder for Teenagers to Obtain Would Affect the Number of Teenage Pregnancies

As was mentioned, opponents of the proposed law to require parental consent feel that making contraceptives more difficult for teenagers to obtain would result in more teenage pregnancies. The survey found that 53% of the public feel that making contraceptives more difficult to obtain would cause

more teenage pregnancies. Only 18% feel that this would lead to fewer teenage pregnancies, and nearly one-third (29%) feel that this would have no effect on the number of teenage pregnancies (Table 11).

Observation:

This result obviously weakens the case for the 48% in favor of the "squeal law." When confronted with the reality of making contraceptives harder for teenagers to obtain, most people admit it will lead to more pregnancies. Parents would like to share in the decision about whether or not their children use contraceptives but acknowledge the undesirable effect of mandating this by law.

Table 1

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WHO SAY TEENAGE PREGNANCY IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM

Q.: Do you think that the number of teenage pregnancies in the United States is a serious problem or a not so serious problem?

	Base		Serious Problem	Not So Serious Problem	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	84	11	5
Region					
East	311	%	82	12	6
Midwest	313	%	83	12	4
South	387	%	86	8	5
West	242	%	84	11	4
Education					
Less than high school	171	%	83	9	9
High school graduate	471	%	87	10	4
Some college	283	%	82	14	4
Four year college graduate	325	%	82	12	5
Sex					
Male	614	%	80	13	7
Female	639	%	88	9	4
Race					
White	1073	%	84	11	5
Black	100	%	87	10	3
Hispanic	80	%	81	14	5
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18					
Have children aged 6-18	403	%	83	12	6
No children aged 6-18	847	%	85	10	5
Religion					
Protestant	748	%	86	9	6
Catholic	338	%	79	15	6
White born-again Christian	183	%	89	5	6
Age					
18-24 years	200	%	82	16	2
25-29 years	182	%	84	11	5
30-49 years	461	%	84	12	5
50-64 years	244	%	87	8	5
65 and over	159	%	84	6	9

Table 2

PARENTS' CONTROL OVER THEIR TEENAGERS' SEXUAL ACTIVITY:
AMONG THOSE WHO DO OR DO NOT HAVE CHILDREN AGED 6-18,
AND BY OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Q.: I'd like your impression of how much control most parents have over their teenagers' sexual activity -- a great deal of control, some control, not too much control, or no control at all?

	Base		A Great Deal of Control	Some Control	Not Too Much Control at All	No Control at All	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	3	32	46	18	3
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18							
Have children aged 6-18	403	%	4	37	40	18	1
No children aged 6-18	847	%	2	29	48	17	3
Sex							
Male	614	%	3	32	48	15	2
Female	639	%	3	31	44	20	2
Age							
18-24 years	200	%	3	32	47	18	-
25-29 years	182	%	2	32	44	21	1
30-49 years	461	%	3	36	45	15	1
50-64 years	244	%	2	31	46	17	4
65 and over	159	%	3	23	47	20	7
Race							
White	1073	%	3	32	47	16	2
Black	100	%	2	27	43	24	3
Hispanic	80	%	2	35	32	31	-
Education							
Less than high school	171	%	3	28	45	20	5
High school graduate	471	%	3	30	45	21	2
Some college	283	%	2	32	50	14	1
Four year college graduate	325	%	3	43	45	9	*

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 3

PARENTS' CONTROL OVER THEIR TEENAGERS' SEXUAL ACTIVITY:
BY RELIGION, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, AND PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Q.: I'd like your impression of how much control most parents have over their teenagers' sexual activity -- a great deal of control, some control, not too much control, or no control at all?

	Base		A Great Deal of Control	Some Control	Not Too Much Control at All	No Control at All	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	3	32	46	18	3
Religion							
Protestant	748	%	3	31	46	16	3
Catholic	338	%	2	30	46	21	1
White born-again Christian	183	%	5	23	46	20	6
Political Philosophy							
Conservative	473	%	3	31	42	21	2
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	2	33	50	13	2
Liberal	273	%	3	31	45	19	2
Party Identification							
Republican	400	%	3	28	50	17	2
Democrat	420	%	3	31	44	18	3
Independent	346	%	1	36	44	17	2

Table 4

MOST IMPORTANT THING PARENTS SHOULD DO TO HELP PREVENT THEIR TEENAGE CHILDREN FROM BECOMING PREGNANT

Q.: What do you think is the most important thing that parents should do to help prevent their teenage children from either becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy?

					Sex		Age				
	Total	Have Children Aged 6-18	No Children Aged 6-18	Single Parent Household With Children Aged 6-18	Male	Female	18-24 Years	25-29 Years	30-49 Years	50-64 Years	65 and Over
Base	1253	403	847	62	614	639	200	182	461	244	159
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Communication/education	35	38	33	37	37	33	31	31	38	38	31
Explain birth control/ contraceptive methods	17	19	17	20	13	21	26	23	20	10	6
Explain risks/consequences of sex/pregnancy	13	13	12	10	13	12	14	12	13	13	10
Set a good example/teach good values	12	11	12	7	11	12	5	7	12	14	20
More discipline/control of children	9	7	10		11	7	7	6	5	10	19
Educate at early age	6	5	7	6	5	8	3	3	8	5	10
Teach/encourage religious beliefs	6	6	6	2	6	6	2	4	6	9	11
Be open/honest	6	6	7	6	5	7	8	10	7	4	3
Give them/put them on pills/contraception	5	6	5	12	3	7	8	8	5	4	2
Teach no sex before marriage	2	2	2	3	2	3	*	2	2	3	3
Other mentions	2	1	2	-	2	2	2	3	2	2	*
Don't know/no answer	5	6	5	7	5	5	9	7	3	5	7

Table 5

MOST IMPORTANT THING PARENTS SHOULD DO TO HELP PREVENT THEIR TEENAGE CHILDREN FROM BECOMING PREGNANT: BY EDUCATION, RACE, AND RELIGION

Q.: What do you think is the most important thing that parents should do to help prevent their teenage children from either becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy?

		Education				Race			Religion		
	Total	Less Than High School	High School Graduate	Some College	4 Year College Graduate or More	White	Black	Hispanic	Protestant	Catholic	White Born-Again Christian
Base	1253	171	471	283	325	1073	100	80	748	338	183
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Communication/education	35	35	35	37	31	34	40	43	35	35	31
Explain birth control/ contraceptive methods	17	9	19	21	23	18	17	10	10	20	12
Explain risks/consequences of sex/pregnancy	13	10	13	12	15	12	14	12	11	15	10
Set a good example/teach good values	12	10	11	11	16	12	7	12	13	10	13
More discipline/control of children	9	13	8	9	6	9	8	6	9	9	9
Educate at early age	6	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	6
Teach/encourage religious beliefs	6	7	5	8	6	7	3	3	8	4	20
Be open/honest	6	6	6	8	7	6	5	7	5	8	5
Give them/put them on pills/contraception	5	8	6	2	2	5	9	4	6	5	3
Teach no sex before marriage	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	-	3	1	3
Other mentions	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	-	2	2	1
Don't know/no answer	5	8	5	3	4	6	1	9	5	6	6

Table 6

WHERE PEOPLE FIRST LEARNED ABOUT SEX

Q.: Where did you first learn about sex -- from your mother, your father, friends, sexual partner, sex education courses, or from some other source?

				Less Than High School	High School Graduate	Some College	4 Years College or More				Age				
	Total	Male	Female					White	Black	Hispanic	18-24 Years	25-29 Years	30-49 Years	50-64 Years	65 and Over
Base	1253	614	639	171	471	283	325	1073	100	80	200	182	461	244	159
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mother	21	8	33	20	21	24	20	21	22	22	24	14	21	22	23
Father	5	10	1	3	6	3	9	5	5	4	3	7	5	6	5
Friends	40	46	35	42	39	38	45	40	38	44	34	39	43	42	41
Sexual partner	10	12	8	10	12	9	7	11	4	7	10	13	12	6	9
Sex education courses	8	6	9	6	9	9	7	7	12	10	17	18	5	4	*
Other source	8	10	7	9	8	11	7	8	9	10	7	6	8	11	11
Reading/books	3	2	3	4	2	1	4	2	7	3	3	2	3	3	2
Sister	2	*	3	3	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	*	2	3	2
Not sure	2	4	1	3	2	3	1	3	2	1	1	*	2	3	7

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 7

PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO HAVE TALKED WITH THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT SEX

Base: Those parents with children aged 6-18

Q.: Has some adult in the household talked with any of them yet about sex?

	Base		Yes	No	Not Sure
Total Parents With Children Aged 6-18	403	%	76	21	3
Single Parent Household With Children Aged 6-18	62	%	71	26	3
Race					
White	327	%	79	19	2
Black	43	%	65	29	7
Hispanic	33	%	70	29	2
Education					
Less than high school	56	%	71	27	2
High school graduate	171	%	76	21	4
Some college	87	%	81	17	2
4 year college graduate or more	89	%	83	16	1
Religion					
Protestant	236	%	81	16	3
Catholic	113	%	67	29	4
White born-again Christian	58	%	86	9	5
Political Philosophy					
Conservative	236	%	84	14	2
Middle-of-the-road	113	%	75	21	4
Liberal	58	%	70	30	-

Table 8

CHILDREN'S AGE WHEN PARENTS FIRST DISCUSSED SEX WITH THEM

Base: Parents with children ages 6-18 who have discussed sex with them

Q.: How old were they when this was first discussed?

	Parents With Children Aged 6-18 Who Have Talked With Them About Sex
	%
Base: 313	
Age	
Under 6 years	14
6-9 years	28
10-12 years	36
13 or more years	16

Table 9

WHETHER OR NOT PARENTS' DISCUSSION OF SEX WITH THEIR CHILDREN INCLUDED BIRTH CONTROL

Base: Parents with children aged 6-18 who have discussed sex with them

Q.: Did that talk include any discussion about birth control?

	Base	Yes	No	Not Sure
		%	%	%
Parents with children aged 6-18 who have discussed sex with them	313	33	61	5

Table 10

FAVOR OR OPPOSE "SQUEAL LAW"

Q.: I'd like to ask you some questions about the abortion issue. Do you favor or oppose a federal law prohibiting family planning clinics from giving birth control assistance to teenagers unless they have received permission from their parents?

	September 1985					March 1984				
	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Total	1257	%	48	47	5	1504	%	44	53	3
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18										
Have children ages 6-18	423	%	52	44	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
No children ages 6-18	832	%	47	48	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Education										
Less than high school	207	%	53	40	5	49	%	63	32	5
High school graduate	432	%	52	43	4	749	%	49	48	4
Some college	286	%	43	54	3	368	%	43	55	2
Four year college graduate	328	%	38	58	4	336	%	30	66	4
Marital Status										
Married or have been married	993	%	48	46	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Never married	260	%	49	50	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Race										
White	1054	%	47	48	5	1299	%	43	54	3
Black	115	%	54	45	2	136	%	47	49	5
Hispanic	88	%	56	40	3	69	%	51	44	5
Religion										
Protestant	730	%	50	46	4	729	%	44	52	4
Catholic	376	%	49	47	4	412	%	48	50	2
White born-again Christian	185	%	54	42	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Political Philosophy										
Conservative	434	%	58	37	4	527	%	52	45	4
Middle-of-the-road	490	%	44	52	4	591	%	40	58	3
Liberal	277	%	42	55	4	304	%	37	62	1
Party Identification										
Republican	401	%	52	43	5	346	%	44	52	4
Democrat	456	%	49	47	4	620	%	43	53	4
Independent	321	%	45	51	4	443	%	44	54	2

(Continued)

Table 10 (Continued)

FAVOR OR OPPOSE "SQUEAL LAW"

	September 1985					March 1984				
	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Age										
18-29 years	355	%	44	53	2	440	%	37	62	1
30-49 years	511	%	49	47	3	596	%	42	54	4
50-64 years	224	%	49	46	5	300	%	53	45	3
65 and over	156	%	52	38	10	161	%	49	44	7
Sex										
Male	606	%	49	48	4	499	%	47	51	3
Female	651	%	48	46	5	1005	%	42	55	4
Region										
East	312	%	45	51	4	386	%	41	55	5
Midwest	311	%	51	46	3	392	%	47	51	2
South	388	%	49	45	7	456	%	49	47	4
West	246	%	49	47	4	270	%	36	62	2
Area										
Central city	379	%	45	53	1	467	%	42	56	2
Rest of metropolitan area	575	%	49	46	5	660	%	45	52	3
Outside metropolitan area	303	%	51	41	8	377	%	45	50	5

NA = Not asked.

Table 11

EFFECT OF MAKING CONTRACEPTIVES MORE DIFFICULT FOR TEENAGERS TO OBTAIN ON THE NUMBER OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

Q.: If it became more difficult for teenagers to obtain contraceptives, do you think this would lead to more teenage pregnancies, fewer teenage pregnancies, or would this have no effect on the number of teenage pregnancies?

	Base		More Pregnancies	Fewer Pregnancies	No Effect	Not Sure/ Don't Know
Total	1253	%	53	18	29	-
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18						
Have children aged 6-18	403	%	54	17	29	-
No children aged 6-18	847	%	53	19	29	-
Education						
Less than high school	171	%	41	25	34	-
High school graduate	471	%	55	18	27	-
Some college	283	%	60	14	26	-
Four year college graduate	325	%	60	11	29	-
Race						
White	1073	%	53	18	30	-
Black	100	%	54	22	24	-
Hispanic	80	%	54	15	31	-
Religion						
Protestant	748	%	50	19	31	-
Catholic	338	%	58	17	25	-
White born-again Christian	183	%	42	19	39	-
Political Philosophy						
Conservative	473	%	49	18	33	-
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	57	17	26	-
Liberal	273	%	57	18	25	-
Party Identification						
Republican	400	%	50	16	35	-
Democrat	420	%	51	21	28	-
Independent	346	%	58	16	25	-
Age						
18-24 years	200	%	62	21	17	-
25-29 years	182	%	59	21	21	-
30-49 years	461	%	58	13	29	-
50-64 years	244	%	46	19	34	-
65 and over	139	%	35	23	41	-

CHAPTER 2: THE ROLE OF SOCIETY AND THE MEDIA

A majority of the American public appears to recognize the potential benefits for society which would accrue from a more open discussion of sexual topics, especially discussions in the media about the necessity of birth control to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Sixty-two percent of the public believe that more open discussion of sexual topics would lead to fewer teenage pregnancies. Only 9% feel that more open discussion of sex would cause more teenage pregnancies, but a substantial minority of 29% say that more open discussion would have no effect on the number of teenage pregnancies (Table 12).

The proportion who feel that more open discussion about sex would lead to more teenage pregnancies rises to 12% among self-described political conservatives, 13% among Republicans, and 19% among white born-again Christians.

Observation:

1. It should be noted that majorities of each of the groups cited above -- albeit a bare majority of 50% among white born-again Christians -- believe that teenage pregnancies would decline as a result of more open discussion of sex. Nevertheless, the differences of opinion between white born-again Christians and the rest of the population suggest substantial support among these fundamentalist groups for a long-standing taboo in America about public discussion of sex.

2. The Alan Guttmacher Institute study of adolescent pregnancy and childbearing in the United States and Western Europe concluded that the formula for reducing the number of teenage pregnancies is an open discussion throughout society -- in the home, the media, public forums, and in schools -- of sexuality and birth control. The study also concluded that Sweden, the Netherlands, France, and England have been far more

aggressive and thorough than the United States in pursuing and achieving these objectives. The results, according to the study, have been declining rates of teenage pregnancy, abortion, and adolescent childbearing in major West European countries, and the opposite results in the United States.

Discussion of Sexual Subjects and Birth Control in the Media

Table 13 shows that the great majority of Americans believe that television presents either an exaggerated picture or fails outright to address subjects dealing with sex such as family planning to prevent pregnancy and to control family size, pregnancy and the consequences of sex, sexual intercourse, and information about sexually transmitted diseases. Sixty-eight percent feel that television does not deal much at all with the subject of family planning to prevent pregnancy, 63% feel that television doesn't present information about sexually transmitted diseases, and 45% feel that television doesn't address the subject of pregnancy and the consequences of sex.

People who have less than a high school education and high school graduates are more likely than those with college degrees to believe that television portrays these subjects realistically. Nine percent of college graduates believe that television portrays people making love realistically, compared to 24% of those who did not graduate high school. A similar gap separates the proportion of these same groups -- 6% and 22% respectively -- who think television deals realistically with the subject of family planning.

Slightly higher percentages of blacks and Hispanics than whites believe television portrays these subjects realistically, with one major difference. Forty percent of Hispanics think television gives a realistic

picture of pregnancy and the consequences of sex, compared to 23% of whites and 18% of blacks.

Observation:

These findings mean that Americans believe that television, the most powerful medium of communication in this country, rarely evokes more open discussion of sex and contraception by presenting realistic, informative discussion or representation of sexual subjects. The public feels that television distorts these subjects through exaggeration or fails altogether to offer relevant programming. The next finding provides powerful evidence the the public feels that this should change.

Nearly 8 in 10 Americans aged 18 and over believe that television should present messages about birth control in its programming (Table 14). This finding signals a clear mandate for television to take a more active role in informing the public about the importance of contraception, methods of contraception, and how to obtain contraceptives. Among Americans between the ages of 18 and 29, blacks, and liberals the proportion in support of television assuming this responsibility rises to nearly 9 in 10 people.

Support for bringing messages about birth control on the air waves drops somewhat among conservatives (73%), Republicans (72%), people aged 50-64 (70%) and 65 and over (62%), and white born-again Christians (67%). Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that large majorities of people in these groups favor television dealing openly with birth control in its programming.

Observation:

These results contain a strong message from Americans: that television should deal realistically with sex and birth control, and by means of its power as a communicator of ideas, encourage healthy and serious discussion about sex throughout society.

Perceptions About the Likelihood of New
Contraceptives Being Developed in the Near Future

It would seem that in addition to educating the public about the use and effectiveness of available contraceptive methods, messages about birth control on television might inform people about the chances that new, more effective contraceptives -- such as a pill for men -- will be invented in the near future.

Seventy-six percent of the public believes it is at least somewhat likely that in the next five years there will be a breakthrough in contraceptive research that will produce new, more effective contraceptives. A plurality of 40% believes that such a breakthrough is very likely, and this figure rises to 45% among men, 45% among people in the West, and 46% among those with some college education (Table 15).

Table 12

EFFECT OF MORE OPEN DISCUSSION OF SEXUAL TOPICS
ON NUMBER OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

Q.: If there was more open discussion in society of sexual topics, would this lead to more teenage pregnancies, fewer teenage pregnancies, or would this have no effect on the number of teenage pregnancies?

	Base		More Pregnancies	Fewer Pregnancies	No Effect	Not Sure/ Don't Know
Total	1253	%	9	62	29	-
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18						
Have children aged 6-18	403	%	9	59	33	-
No children aged 6-18	847	%	9	64	27	-
Education						
Less than high school	171	%	12	57	31	-
High school graduate	471	%	10	61	29	-
Some college	283	%	6	64	30	-
Four year college graduate	325	%	7	68	24	-
Race						
White	1073	%	10	60	30	-
Black	100	%	6	74	20	-
Hispanic	80	%	5	63	32	-
Religion						
Protestant	748	%	11	60	29	-
Catholic	338	%	7	63	29	-
White born-again Christian	183	%	19	50	32	-
Political Philosophy						
Conservative	473	%	12	57	31	-
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	7	66	26	-
Liberal	273	%	7	65	28	-
Party Identification						
Republican	400	%	13	57	30	-
Democrat	420	%	7	64	28	-
Independent	346	%	8	64	28	-

Table 13

PERCEPTIONS OF HOW TELEVISION PORTRAYS SEXUAL SUBJECTS

Q.: We're interested in how you think television portrays subjects dealing with sex. For each subject, tell me whether you think television gives a realistic picture, an exaggerated picture, or doesn't deal with the subject much at all.

Base: 1253	TV Gives Realistic Picture	TV Gives Exaggerated Picture	TV Doesn't Deal With It Much at All	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%
People making love	18	68	11	3
Pregnancy and the consequences of sex	24	25	45	6
Family planning to prevent pregnancy and to control family size	17	9	68	6
Information about sexually transmitted diseases	28	6	63	3

Table 14

WHETHER THERE SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT BE MESSAGES ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL ON TELEVISION

Q.: In addition to the way sex is now handled on television, do you think there also should, or should not, be messages about birth control?

	Base		Should Be Messages	Should Not Be Messages	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	78	18	4
Region					
East	311	%	79	20	2
Midwest	313	%	81	17	2
South	387	%	77	17	6
West	242	%	76	19	4
Age					
18-24 years	200	%	86	12	1
25-29 years	182	%	91	7	2
30-49 years	461	%	82	16	2
50-64 years	244	%	70	25	5
65 and over	159	%	62	29	8
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18					
Have children aged 6-18	403	%	81	17	2
No children aged 6-18	847	%	77	19	5
Education					
Less than high school	171	%	75	21	3
High school graduate	471	%	80	17	3
Some college	283	%	79	16	5
Four year college graduate	325	%	78	18	4
Race					
White	1073	%	77	19	4
Black	100	%	86	12	2
Hispanic	80	%	80	17	3
Religion					
Protestant	748	%	76	20	4
Catholic	338	%	82	15	2
White born-again Christian	183	%	67	26	7
Political Philosophy					
Conservative	473	%	73	23	4
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	81	16	3
Liberal	273	%	85	13	2
Party Identification					
Republican	400	%	72	24	4
Democrat	420	%	82	15	3
Independent	346	%	81	15	4

Table 15

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF A NEW BREAKTHROUGH IN BIRTH CONTROL

Q.: How likely do you think it is that there will be some new breakthrough or invention of a more effective new form of birth control during the next five years -- very likely, somewhat likely, hardly likely, or not at all likely?

	Base		Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Hardly Likely	Not at All Likely	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	40	36	14	6	3
Region							
East	311	%	34	44	14	5	3
Midwest	313	%	41	37	13	5	3
South	387	%	42	30	16	8	4
West	242	%	45	36	14	4	1
Sex							
Male	614	%	45	31	15	7	2
Female	639	%	36	42	14	5	3
Education							
Less than high school	171	%	35	33	16	10	6
High school graduate	471	%	41	39	13	5	2
Some college	283	%	46	34	14	5	2
Four year college graduate	325	%	40	37	17	4	2
Race							
White	1073	%	40	37	14	6	2
Black	100	%	40	32	14	6	8
Hispanic	80	%	41	31	16	5	6
Age							
18-24 years	200	%	30	49	12	9	*
25-29 years	182	%	37	39	15	8	1
30-49 years	461	%	43	34	17	4	1
50-64 years	244	%	45	35	12	4	4
65 and over	159	%	43	28	14	7	9

*Less than 0.5%.

CHAPTER 3: THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOLS

This chapter examines public perceptions about the availability of sex education in schools, levels of acceptance of sex education, its perceived effects, and strength of support for policy changes which would require schools to establish liaisons with family planning clinics.

Perceptions About the Availability of Sex Education in Schools

A 53% majority of Americans believes that sex education is available today in most schools. This majority rises to 57% among women, 59% among people in the East, 60% among people who live in households with 6-18 year old children, 67% in single parent households with 6-18 year old children, and 61% among white born-again Christians (Table 16).

Observation:

A study prepared by the Urban Institute in 1983 reports that only about 10% of American students have received a comprehensive and timely sex education in school. This is defined as sex education for 75% of students enrolled which includes information about both biological functions and contraception, and which is taught before the average age when Americans first have sexual intercourse. The study states that the average age is 16.7 years old. This is an extremely stringent definition of sex education. The same Urban Institute study also reported that some form of sex education -- not necessarily a separate course -- is available in big city public schools for 78% of high school programs and 73% of elementary level programs.

Thus, it appears that Americans correctly believe that sex education in schools is widely available in some form, though it may be neither timely nor comprehensive.

Acceptance of Sex Education in Schools

People not only believe sex education is widely available in schools, they offer overwhelming support for it. More than 8 in 10 adults agree strongly (64%) or agree somewhat (21%) that sex education should be taught in schools. Only 14% disagree somewhat or strongly with majority opinion, as Tables 17 and 18 show. This is a vast level of support to make sex education widely available for students in American schools.

The majority who agree strongly that sex education should be taught in schools increases among: people aged 18-39, those with a bachelor's degree or at least some college education, blacks, Hispanics, Catholics, and liberals.

There is an appreciable drop in strong support for sex education among people aged 65 and over, conservatives, and white born-again Christians. But solid majorities, ranging from 68% of white born-again Christians to 80% of conservatives, agree at least somewhat that sex education ought to be taught in schools

Observation:

The 17 percentage point gap separating strength of support by white born-again Christians from the public as a whole is another of many findings which show that this group's opinions about these subjects often differ substantially from those of a majority of Americans.

Effect of Eliminating Sex Education in Schools

People next were asked how eliminating sex education from the schools would affect the number of teenage pregnancies in the United States. The findings provide another measure of public approval for the teaching of sex educations in schools: 54% believe that eliminating sex education from schools would lead to more teenage pregnancies. Sixteen percent feel there

would be fewer pregnancies as a result of this, and 29% say there would be no effect on the number of teenage pregnancies (Table 19).

Observation:

The majority who believe that without sex education in schools there would be more teenage pregnancies provides some insight about why people support sex education so strongly. The public clearly identifies sex education in schools as a primary source of information for teenagers, along with sex education in the home and, potentially, in the media. Parents strongly endorse filling in the gaps about sex education which have not been broached in the home. Policymakers should note this mandate for the achievement of universal sex education in schools which includes, as the next finding shows, emphasis on the critical role of birth control.

Support for Requiring Schools to Establish Links With Family Planning Clinics

The survey asked people whether they favor or oppose requiring public schools to establish links with family planning clinics, so that teenagers can learn about contraceptives and obtain them. A substantial 2 to 1 majority of adults would favor public policies to forge direct associations between schools and family planning clinics: 67% favor establishing these links, and 29% oppose them (Table 20). However, the majority in favor rises considerably among several key groups: blacks (76%), Hispanics (76%), and those aged 18-24 (83%) and 25-29 (80%).

Opposition to this idea is highest among conservatives, with 36% opposed, those aged 50-64 (36%) and 65 and over (41%), and white born-again Christians (41%). Nevertheless, majorities of these groups all favor requiring schools to establish links with family planning clinics.

It is critical that more than 3 of 4 people whose teenagers are most likely to become pregnant and/or closest to the experiences of high school students support this idea. This virtual consensus is a mark of recognition, especially among 18-24 year-olds, that sexually active teenagers need convenient, reliable counseling about, and access to, contraceptives.

Observation:

The strength and pervasiveness of public support shown in Table 20 provide evidence that the mandate described in this chapter is for sex education in schools which not only informs students about contraception but channels sexually active students to ready sources of contraception. It may also be interpreted as an oblique admission that Americans find it hard to talk to their children about contraception, as was shown by the low proportion (33%) of adults who have included discussion of birth control in talking to their children about sex.

Strong support for making schools the key source of information may thus be interpreted as another indicator that parents look to society to communicate to teenagers where parents have failed to. Taken in tandem with the support of nearly 8 in 10 Americans for messages about birth control on televison, the public's open support for mass communicated sex education approaches a mandate.

School-based family planning services are mandated by law in Sweden, the Netherlands, France and other Western European nations. For the most part, school family planning programs in these countries are closely associated with the national health services, which provide contraceptive services to all citizens.

During the past few years a number of communities in the United States have introduced clinics in or near public high schools and junior high schools which offer comprehensive health care, including family planning services similar to those offered in some European schools. Many of these clinics are located in poor areas of the U.S. Funding has come primarily from state maternal and child health (MCH) block grant funds and from national foundations. Confidentiality about the nature of these visits is maintained, but most programs require -- and receive -- parental consent for their children to use the health services.

That these school health clinics usually require parental consent forms suggests that designers of these programs understand parents' contradictory feelings about their children being sexually active and using contraceptives. The split in public opinion about the "squeal law" illustrates this ambivalence clearly. If read narrowly, this split could cast doubt on the strength of public support for linking schools with family planning clinics. But this is thrown into perspective by the public's sober assessment of the feeble amount of control which parents have over teenagers' sexual activity. Parents don't like it, but most realize that they can't stop it -- and that they fail to provide the counseling about contraception which teenagers need. In short, parents admit that they need help in educating their teenagers about sex and the use of contraceptives.

Table 16

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE AVAILABILITY OF SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Q.: Is it your impression that sex education is available today in most schools, or that it is not available in most schools?

	Base		Available	Not Available	Not at All	Not Sure/ Don't Know
Total	1253	%	53	39	4	3
Region						
East	311	%	59	32	5	4
Midwest	313	%	54	41	3	3
South	387	%	48	44	4	4
West	242	%	55	38	5	2
Sex						
Male	614	%	50	44	4	3
Female	639	%	57	35	4	4
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18						
Have children aged 6-18	403	%	60	37	2	1
No children aged 6-18	847	%	50	40	5	4
Single parent household with children aged 6-18	62	%	67	32	1	-
Race						
White	1073	%	54	38	4	4
Black	100	%	47	47	5	1
Hispanic	80	%	52	44	2	1
Education						
Less than high school	171	%	53	38	5	4
High school graduate	471	%	54	40	3	3
Some college	283	%	54	40	4	2
Four year college graduate	325	%	51	40	4	4
Religion						
Protestant	748	%	53	39	4	4
Catholic	338	%	55	39	4	3
White born-again Christian	183	%	61	29	5	5

Table 17

PERCENTAGE WHO AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS

Q.: Next, I'd like to ask you some questions about sex education in public schools. Please say whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the following statement. Sex education should be taught in public schools?

	Base		Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	64	21	6	8	1
Area							
Central city	378	%	68	22	3	7	*
Other urban areas	578	%	65	21	6	7	*
Outside urban areas	297	%	57	20	8	12	3
Sex							
Male	614	%	61	23	5	10	1
Female	639	%	66	20	6	7	1
Age							
18-24 years	200	%	74	19	5	3	-
25-29 years	182	%	68	23	4	5	-
30-49 years	461	%	70	19	5	7	*
50-64 years	244	%	56	25	6	12	3
65 and over	159	%	48	22	11	17	2
Education							
Less than high school	171	%	58	19	8	13	1
High school graduate	471	%	63	22	5	9	1
Some college	283	%	66	22	6	6	1
Four year college graduate	325	%	72	21	4	2	1
Race							
White	1073	%	62	22	6	9	1
Black	100	%	74	17	1	6	2
Hispanic	80	%	70	18	6	6	-
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18							
Have children aged 6-18	403	%	67	20	6	7	-
No children aged 6-18	847	%	62	22	5	9	1

Table 18

PERCENTAGE WHO AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS: BY RELIGION, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, AND PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Q.: Next, I'd like to ask you some questions about sex education in public schools. Please say whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the following statement. Sex education should be taught in public schools?

	Base		Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	64	21	6	8	1
Religion							
Protestant	748	%	61	23	6	9	1
Catholic	338	%	71	18	3	7	*
White born-again Christian	183	%	47	21	13	17	2
Political Philosophy							
Conservative	473	%	57	23	8	11	1
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	67	23	4	5	1
Liberal	273	%	74	17	3	5	*
Party Identification							
Republican	400	%	61	21	8	9	1
Democrat	420	%	66	21	4	8	1
Independent	346	%	64	22	5	8	1

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 19

EFFECT OF ELIMINATING SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS
ON NUMBER OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

Q.: If sex education was eliminated in the schools, do you think this would lead to more teenage pregnancies, fewer teenage pregnancies, or would this have no effect on the number of teenage pregnancies?

	Base		More Pregnancies	Fewer Pregnancies	No Effect	Not Sure/ Don't Know
Total	1253	%	54	16	29	1
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18						
Have children aged 6-18	403	%	56	15	29	-
No children aged 6-18	847	%	52	17	29	1
Education						
Less than high school	171	%	44	24	32	1
High school graduate	471	%	51	17	31	1
Some college	283	%	64	14	21	*
Four year college graduate	325	%	63	8	28	1
Race						
White	1073	%	54	16	30	1
Black	100	%	46	25	29	-
Hispanic	80	%	62	14	21	3
Religion						
Protestant	748	%	49	19	31	1
Catholic	338	%	60	14	26	1
White born-again Christian	183	%	41	20	38	1
Political Philosophy						
Conservative	473	%	50	16	34	1
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	57	15	28	*
Liberal	273	%	56	19	24	1
Party Identification						
Republican	400	%	53	16	31	*
Democrat	420	%	55	19	26	1
Independent	346	%	53	14	32	*

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 20

FAVOR OR OPPOSE REQUIRING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TO ESTABLISH LINKS WITH FAMILY PLANNING CLINICS

Q.: Would you favor or oppose requiring public schools to establish links with family planning clinics, so that teenagers can learn about contraceptives and obtain them?

	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	67	29	4
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18					
Have children aged 6-18	403	%	69	29	2
No children aged 6-18	847	%	67	29	4
Education					
Less than high school	171	%	68	26	6
High school graduate	471	%	68	28	3
Some college	283	%	66	32	3
Four year college graduate	325	%	64	33	2
Race					
White	1073	%	65	31	4
Black	100	%	76	22	2
Hispanic	80	%	76	22	3
Religion					
Protestant	748	%	65	30	4
Catholic	338	%	70	27	3
White born-again Christian	183	%	52	41	7
Political Philosophy					
Conservative	473	%	62	35	3
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	70	26	4
Liberal	273	%	74	23	2
Party Identification					
Republican	400	%	62	34	4
Democrat	420	%	70	25	4
Independent	346	%	72	26	2
Age					
18-24 years	200	%	83	15	2
25-29 years	182	%	80	18	2
30-49 years	461	%	68	29	3
50-64 years	244	%	57	36	6
65 and over	159	%	52	41	7

CHAPTER 4: PUBLIC ATTITUDES ABOUT ABORTION

The Basic Set of Public Opinion

In modern times, abortion was a matter that was largely governed by state laws. These laws prohibited abortions or placed severe restrictions on circumstances when abortions could be performed. A social movement arose during the 1960's to challenge abortion laws in many states. By 1973 New York, California, and fifteen other states had liberalized restrictive abortion laws or legalized abortion. That same year the Supreme Court made a historic decision, Roe vs. Wade, which prohibited the federal and state governments from interfering with a woman's right to have an abortion. The ruling followed the trend set by seventeen states and established the legal right of choice throughout the country.

Since that decision, anti-abortion forces have stepped up campaigns which have concentrated on obtaining relief for their position through legislation that would ban abortion. One of their highest priorities has been to pass a constitutional ban on abortions. The anti-abortion forces were heartened by the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and his re-election in 1984. President Reagan has stood adamant in his opposition to abortion.

Despite these hopeful signs for the anti-abortion movement, there has been no evidence whatsoever that a constitutional ban on abortion can obtain anything close to majority backing from the American people, let alone the extraordinary majorities which are necessary to amend the constitution. In this current survey, a 55-37% majority nationwide opposes such a constitutional ban on abortion (Table 21). This is down slightly from a comparable 58-33% majority who shared the same view in June 1984 (Table 22). In July

1982, opposition to a ban on abortion was still higher, with 62% a majority opposed and 31% in favor of such a ban.

The reasons for opposition to such a ban are not hard to find (Table 23):

-- By 73-22%, a big majority oppose a ban "if the woman's life would be in danger from pregnancy."

-- By 69-26%, another sizable majority would oppose a ban "if a woman would have to give birth to a baby that resulted from rape or incest."

-- By 66-29%, a majority would oppose a ban "if the woman's physical health would be endangered from the pregnancy."

-- By 64-30%, a majority would oppose such a ban "if there is a likelihood that the child will be deformed or retarded."

-- By 62-33%, a majority oppose a ban "if the future life of an unmarried teenage girl might be seriously affected by having a baby."

-- By 58-37%, a majority also would oppose a ban "if the woman's mental health would be endangered from the pregnancy."

-- By 53-41%, a majority also would oppose a ban "if the woman would have to go on welfare if she had the child."

-- By 52-42%, a majority would oppose a ban on abortion "if the child would be unwanted and unloved."

Observation:

Although there has been some marginal slippage in the overall numbers who oppose a constitutional ban on abortion, solid majorities still would oppose a ban on abortions under eight different possible conditions -- ranging from a pregnancy that would endanger the life of a woman to a situation where an unwanted and unloved child would result from an unwanted birth.

In today's climate, the focus of debate over abortion is precisely whether abortion will be banned or women will have the right to choice over having an abortion. A ban would eliminate choice. Choice allows a woman to have an abortion with the advice of her physician or to have the child.

In their solid opposition to a ban, it is apparent that the American people are opting clearly for choice.

Support for the 1973 Supreme Court Decision Narrows

In this study, support for Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision, stands at 50-47% (Table 24), down from a more substantial 56-42% majority who favored it in January 1985 (Table 25).

The division of public opinion on this question is dramatic. For example, among those with some college education or better, a 64-33% majority supports the Supreme Court decision, while the decision is opposed by a 53-43% margin among those with no more than a high school education. Similarly, by religion, Protestants favor the decision by 49-47%, while Catholics oppose it by 50-47% and white born-again Christians oppose it by a wide 66-31%. By political philosophy, conservatives oppose the Court's position on abortion by 57-42%, compared with a 55-40% majority of moderates and a 56-39% majority of liberals who support the decision.

In the West, a big 61-38% majority backs the Court, as does a 54-41% majority of those in the East. However, in the Midwest, a 51-48% majority oppose the decision, as does a more sizable 53-42% majority in the South. In the cities and suburbs, a 53-44% majority supports the Court decision, but rural and small town residents oppose it by a sizable 56-40%.

Finally, among those in the childbearing age groups below 50, a 55-43% majority favors the Supreme Court decision, but among those not in the childbearing age group, a 53-42% majority opposes the decision.

The most decisive shifts in opinion between January and September took place among three groups: among blacks, where support slipped from 57% to 42%; among Southerners, where backing dropped from 52% to 42%; and among those 65 and over, where backing dropped from 54% to 41%. Thus, the narrowing of the margin by which the American people support the U.S. Supreme Court decision can be attributed to an intensification of opposition in the South, especially among those who are followers of the white Moral Majority

preachers, to a resurgence of opposition among the elderly, who were the last group to support the Court position in the late 1970s, and to a surprising shift among blacks. In the case of blacks, however, a check of other questions asked in this survey on abortion indicates that they are as supportive or even more supportive of abortion rights than whites, except on the question where the Supreme Court is discussed. A check indicates that the number of blacks who have a "great deal of confidence" in the Supreme Court has dropped over the past decade from 43% down to 31%, while, in contrast, the comparable high confidence number among whites has risen from 31% to 35% over the same period.

Observation:

Even though there has been a narrowing of support for the U.S. Supreme Court decision, the balance still is on the side of legalized abortion to the end of the first trimester of pregnancy. We are confident of this assertion because this key trend question was asked in both independent national cross-sections of the survey. Both cross-sections yielded identical total results, with 50% in favor and 47% opposed.

The most politically relevant measure of support for abortion under various circumstances is whether people believe abortion should or should not be banned. As shown earlier, majorities oppose banning abortion under all eight circumstances examined in Table 23. However, the issue also can be cast to reflect the result of Roe vs. Wade, which made abortions available throughout the country.

Table 26 presents a parallel series which shows how people responded when asked if abortion should or should not be available under the same eight circumstances. Strength of support falls into about the same rank order of curcumstances as in the banning series. But even larger majorities believe abortion should be available when the pregnancy endangers a woman's life (90%) or physical health (83%), or if rape or incest caused the pregnancy (82%).

In contrast to the first series, less than a majority believe abortion should be available: if the child would be unwanted and unloved (46%); and if the woman would have to go on welfare if she had the child (42%).

Observation:

What is critical to understanding public opinion toward abortion under different circumstances is that a key pattern appears in both series. Support for abortion is greatest under circumstances which affect a woman's health. Support is weaker, but still in the majority or close to a majority, when women have abortions to avoid harmful social or economic consequences.

The main difference in responses between the series is that in this second series both pro- and anti-abortion opinion reaches a more extreme level.

Knowledge of Someone Who Has Had an Abortion

Half of all adults in the United States say they know someone (42%) or more than one person (7%) who has had an abortion. And nearly three in ten people say that they know a person "close to them" who has had an abortion.

As Table 27 shows, the proportion who know someone or more than one person rises to a majority among people with some college education (67%), a bachelor's degree (66%), single adults (62%), those aged 18-24 (65%) and 25-29 (66%), women (53%), and several other demographic groups.

But there are some significant differences:

-- Forty-two percent of blacks say they know one or more persons who have had an abortion, compared with 50% of whites and 55% of Hispanics.

-- Forty-one percent of Democrats say they know someone who has had an abortion, compared with 53% of Republicans and 56% of Independents.

-- Thirty-five percentage points separates the proportion of people aged 18-29 (65%) and 50 and over (30%) who know someone who has had an abortion.

-- Only 29% of people who did not finish high school say they know someone who has had an abortion, 38 points lower than the proportion among people with a college education. There is some overlap between the least educated group and the oldest generation.

Observations:

1. That half of all adults claim to know someone who has had an abortion implies that public attitudes toward abortion stem from both personal beliefs and experience with, or exposure to, abortion. The rising abortion rate in this country clearly has affected millions of Americans in some way.

2. The highest rates of teenage and unwanted pregnancy are among blacks and people with the least education. But much lower proportions of these groups say they know someone who has had an abortion. This demonstrates the need for special efforts to insure that these high risk people receive a timely sex education which emphasizes the importance of birth control.

Whether Abortion Will Remain Legal or Will Be Outlawed Again

Few Americans believe that abortion will be outlawed again, an indicator that the public is convinced the legality of abortion is no longer an issue that remains to be settled. Seventy-four percent believe that abortion will remain legal, and only 19% believe it will be outlawed again (Table 28).

Observation:

This finding, along with majority opposition to a constitutional ban on abortion, signify formidable barriers in public opinion for those campaigning to overturn Roe vs. Wade.

Agreement or Disagreement With Key Arguments For and Against Abortion

The final series of questions about abortion measured levels of agreement or disagreement with four key arguments for and against abortion (Table 29).

More than six out of ten people agree with these two arguments in favor of abortion:

-- "Any woman who is three months or less pregnant should have the right to decide, with her doctor's advice, whether or not she wants to have an abortion."

-- "A woman should be able to decide on her own whether or not she has an abortion."

About a third of the public -- 32% and 35%, respectively -- disagree with these arguments.

Fifty-five percent of the public agrees and 42% disagrees with this argument against abortion:

-- "To perform an abortion, even during the first three months of pregnancy, is the equivalent of murder, because a fetus' life has been eliminated."

But a majority does not agree with this second argument against abortion. Forty-six percent agree and 49% disagree that:

-- "The life of the baby is just as important as the life of the mother, so abortions should be banned."

Observation:

These findings provide more convincing evidence that Americans have mixed opinions about abortion but are, on balance demonstrably more in favor of abortion than against it. A majority may well agree that "abortion is the equivalent of murder because a fetus' life has been eliminated." But this does not prevent a larger majority from agreeing that a woman has a right to decide on her own, or in consultation with her doctor, whether to have a baby or an abortion. Over six in ten support this right of choice, even after hearing the key argument against abortion.

This finding adds insight about the nature of majority support for the 1973 Supreme Court decision and majority opposition to a constitutional amendment to ban abortion. Americans believe that abortion is a woman's right, and they do so because they recognize the legitimacy of many circumstances which cause women to have abortions. Half of all adults say they know someone who has had an abortion. And, as the next finding shows, a majority still believe that abortion is not a question of morality; and a larger majority (74%) are convinced that abortion will remain legal.

Profile of the Hardcore Pro- and Anti-Abortion Groups and the Swing Group

The index of opinion about abortion profiled in Table 30 was constructed by assigning numerical values to responses to the four key arguments for and against abortion, discussed in the preceding section. All responses in favor of abortion were assigned a positive value and all responses against abortion were assigned a negative value. The values then were summed across all four questions to yield a composite measure of those who are consistently pro-abortion, anti-abortion, or in the swing group. Those designated either hardcore pro- or hardcore anti-abortion must have given three or four answers consistent with a pro- or anti-abortion position, and no more than one "not sure" answer. No one who gave contradictory answers or more than one "not sure" response was classified in either hardcore group. Thus, the hardcore pro- and anti-abortion groups are a stringent measure of the proportion of Americans who hold these beliefs. This measurement does not guarantee that all respondents who fall into either hardcore group would always express a consistent view on every possible question about abortion, but rather that they would strongly tend toward that position.

Thirty percent of the public comprise the hardcore pro-abortion base of public opinion, and 21% fall into the hardcore anti-abortion group. The other half of the public (49%) may be classified as a swing group, which

consists of people who either are unsure about their stance on two or more key arguments about abortion or hold opinions which are favorable to both pro- and anti-abortion groups.

The composition of both hardcore groups is highly correlated with education and income, and correlated to a smaller degree with race, religion and political philosophy. For example:

-- Those with some college education or a bachelor's degree are about three times more likely to be hardcore pro-abortion than hardcore anti-abortion. In contrast, people who did not finish high school are twice as likely to be hardcore anti-abortion as they are to be hardcore pro-abortion.

-- Those who earn $35,000 a year or more are two-and-a-half times more likely to be hardcore pro-abortion than hardcore anti-abortion. People who earn $15,000 or less fall in equal proportions into both hardcore groups -- about one in five are pro-abortion and one in five are anti-abortion.

-- Far fewer blacks (9%) than whites (23%) classify as hardcore anti-abortion. Both blacks and whites are twice as likely as are Hispanics to be hardcore pro-abortion.

-- White born-again Christians and Catholics are about one-third more likely to be hardcore anti-abortion than are all Protestants.

-- Liberals and people describing their political philosophy as middle-of-the-road are 2-1/2 to 3 times more likely to be hardcore pro-abortion than hardcore anti-abortion. Conservatives are somewhat more likely to be consistently against abortion than consistently pro-abortion.

How the Hardcore Pro- and Anti-Abortion Groups and the Swing Group Stand on Three Key Questions

The final table in this chapter shows, not surprisingly, that an overwhelming majority of the hardcore pro-abortion group favor the 1973 Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion (83%) and oppose a constitutional amendment to ban abortion (85%) (Table 31).

Nearly 9 in 10 of the hardcore anti-abortion group (88%) oppose the 1973 Supreme Court decision and three-fourths (74%) favor a constitutional amendment to ban abortions.

The two hardcore groups also differ greatly on support and opposition to the so-called squeal law. Almost a two-to-one majority -- 63% to 35% -- of the hardcore pro-abortion group oppose the squeal law, while a 56% majority of the hardcore anti-abortion group favor the law.

The stance of the swing group on a ban against abortions and the 1973 Supreme Court decision are largely similar to the opinions of all adults. Thirty-seven percent of the swing group favor a ban on abortions, and 51% oppose a ban. The swing group is divided on the Supreme Court decision, with 46% in favor and 48% opposed.

A majority (54%) of the swing group favors the so-called "squeal law," while 42% oppose it.

Observation:

The key conclusions revealed in this index are: (1) on a hardcore basis alone, pro-abortion sentiment at 31% is half again as large as anti-abortion sentiment at 21%; and (2) nonetheless, on any given issue related to abortion, such as a constitutional ban or support for the 1973 Supreme Court decision, each side must appeal to the broad middle to achieve majority support -- not uncommon for most issues in a voluntary and open society.

Another question which is sometimes used to estimate the relative size of the hardcore pro- and anti-abortion groups is: "In general, do you favor permitting a woman who wants one to have an abortion in all circumstances, some circumstances, or no circumstances?" For the purpose of comparison, this question was included in the survey with the following results: 26% favor abortion in all circumstances, 53% favor abortion in some circumstances, and 20% say abortions should be permitted in no circumstances (Table 32). The size of these three groups is remarkably similar to the estimates yielded by the more sophisticated composite index of hardcore pro- and anti-abortion sentiment. In both the abortion index and this second measure of pro- and anti-abortion sentiment, the demographic groups in each of the three opinion categories also are quite similar in size.

Whether Abortion Is Moral, Immoral, or Not a Question of Morality

Debate concerning abortion often is couched in moral terms. The survey provides a measure of whether abortion is considered moral, immoral, or not a question of morality.

Half of the public (50%) think that abortion is not a question of morality, slightly more than one-third (37%) think abortion is immoral, less than one-tenth (8%) think that abortion is moral, and 5% are not sure (Table 33).

Slightly larger majorities of people aged 18-24 (60%) and 25-29 (56%), liberals (56%), single adults (56%), and people with college education (56%) believe that abortion is not a question of morality.

The proportion who believe that abortion is immoral rises somewhat among people with less than a high school education (48%), Catholics (43%), conservatives (45%), people aged 50-64 (42%) and 65 and over (50%), and Southerners (43%).

But six out of ten (62%) white born-again Christians believe that abortion is immoral, perhaps the most convincing evidence in the survey findings that this group's opinions about abortion and sex education differ significantly from those of the rest of the public.

Observation:

The key result, of course, is that by 58-37%, a clear majority of the American people reject the claim that having an abortion is an immoral act.

Public Awareness of and Attitudes About "The Silent Scream"

In January 1984, the Right-to-Life organization, an anti-abortion group, released a film called "The Silent Scream." The film presented

arguments against abortion and showed a sonographic image of a fetus during an actual abortion. The film has been distributed widely, and has been shown on public television stations. It also received considerable media attention.

Forty-two percent of the public said that they had seen, heard about, or read about "The Silent Scream." Awareness rises to a solid majority of six in ten people with some college education or a bachelor's degree -- the groups most likely to follow television and the newspapers closely (Table 34).

Fourteen percent of adults aged 18 and over say that they actually have seen this film. This means that as many as 20 million Americans claim to have seen this film since its release less than two years ago.

Of those who say they have seen the film, 45% (6% of the total public) said it made them more opposed to abortion, 48% said it did not affect their views, and 5% said it made them more in favor of abortion (Table 35). Eighty-four percent of those who became more opposed to abortion by seeing the film oppose the 1973 Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion. Seventy-two percent of those who said seeing the film did not affect their views on abortion support the decision.

A majority of those who saw the film also said that it was biased. Fifty-six percent say it was biased, 39% say it was mostly objective, and 5% are not sure (Table 36). Over half (53%) who say the film was mostly objective oppose the 1973 Supreme Court decision. Sixty-percent of those who say the film was biased support the decision.

Observation:

It might be claimed that as many as 6% of the total public became more opposed to abortion as a result of seeing "The Silent Scream." However, it cannot be determined how many of these people were disposed to oppose legalized abortion even before they saw the film.

Table 21

FAVOR OR OPPOSE A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO BAN ABORTIONS

Q.: I'd like to ask you some questions about the abortion issue. Do you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment to ban abortions?

	Base
	1257
	%
Favor	37
Oppose	55
Not sure	8

Table 22

FAVOR OR OPPOSE A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO BAN ABORTIONS
BY SOME KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Q.: I'd like to ask you some questions about the abortion issue. Do you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment to ban abortions?

	September 1985					June 1984				
	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Total	1257	%	37	55	8	1254	%	33	58	9
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18										
Have children ages 6-18	423	%	40	52	7	-	-	-	-	-
No children ages 6-18	832	%	35	50	9	-	-	-	-	-
Education										
Less than high school	207	%	39	49	12	68	%	39	35	20
High school graduate	432	%	39	51	10	575	%	38	53	9
Some college	286	%	35	61	4	298	%	32	60	8
Four year college graduate	328	%	29	68	3	313	%	23	71	6
Marital Status										
Married or have been married	993	%	38	52	4	-	-	-	-	-
Never married	260	%	30	66	4	-	-	-	-	-
Race										
White	1054	%	38	54	8	1086	%	34	57	9
Black	115	%	28	67	5	111	%	29	64	7
Hispanic	88	%	34	57	12	59	%	32	59	9
Religion										
Protestant	730	%	37	54	9	641	%	33	56	10
Catholic	376	%	40	53	7	313	%	39	53	8
White born-again Christian	185	%	55	39	6	-	-	-	-	-
Political Philosophy										
Conservative	434	%	44	49	7	438	%	37	53	10
Middle-of-the-road	490	%	36	56	8	499	%	32	60	9
Liberal	277	%	26	63	11	252	%	27	67	6
Party Identification										
Republican	401	%	39	54	7	337	%	34	57	9
Democrat	456	%	35	56	9	467	%	34	58	8
Independent	321	%	36	57	6	355	%	29	61	11

(Continued)

Table 22 (Continued)

FAVOR OR OPPOSE A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO BAN ABORTIONS
BY SOME KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

	September 1985					June 1984				
	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Age										
18-29 years	355	%	31	61	7	330	%	35	62	4
30-49 years	511	%	36	56	8	493	%	30	61	9
50-64 years	224	%	42	50	8	247	%	34	54	13
65 and over	156	%	43	46	10	181	%	36	50	15
Sex										
Male	606	%	36	56	8	602	%	30	60	10
Female	651	%	37	54	9	654	%	36	56	8
Region										
East	312	%	33	60	7	322	%	33	59	8
Midwest	311	%	42	50	7	326	%	33	58	9
South	388	%	37	53	10	373	%	33	57	10
West	240	%	34	59	7	235	%	33	58	9
Area										
Central city	379	%	35	59	6	384	%	33	59	8
Rest of metropolitan area	575	%	35	57	8	563	%	32	60	9
Outside metropolitan area	303	%	42	47	11	309	%	36	53	11

Table 23

CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH ABORTION SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT BE BANNED

Q.: Do you think abortion should be banned, or not banned, if (READ EACH ITEM)?

Base: 1257	Banned %	Not Banned %	Not Sure %
The child would be unwanted and unloved	42	52	7
The woman would have to go on welfare if she had the child	41	53	6
The woman's mental health would be endangered from the pregnancy	37	58	5
The future life of an unmarried teenage girl might be seriously affected by having the baby	33	62	53
There is a likelihood that the child will be deformed or retarded	30	64	7
The woman's physical health would be endangered from the pregnancy	29	66	5
A woman would have to give birth to a baby that resulted from rape or incest	26	69	5
The woman's life would be in danger from the pregnancy	22	73	5

Table 24

FAVOR OR OPPOSE 1973 SUPREME COURT DECISION ON ABORTIONS

Q.: In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court decided that state laws which made it illegal for a woman to have an abortion up to three months of pregnancy were unconstitutional, and that the decision on whether a woman should have an abortion up to three months of pregnancy should be left to the woman and her doctor to decide. In general, do you favor or oppose this part of the U.S. Supreme Court decision making abortions up to three months of pregnancy legal?

Base	1257
	%
Favor	50
Oppose	47
Not sure	4

Table 25

FAVOR OR OPPOSE 1973 SUPREME COURT DECISION ON ABORTION
BY SOME KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Q.: In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court decided that state laws which made it illegal for a woman to have an abortion up to three months of pregnancy were unconstitutional, and that the decision on whether a woman should have an abortion up to three months of pregnancy should be left to the woman and her doctor to decide. In general, do you favor or oppose this part of the U.S. Supreme Court decision making abortions up to three months of pregnancy legal?

	September 1985					January 1985				
	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Total	1257	%	50	47	4	1254	%	56	42	2
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18										
Have children ages 6-18	423	%	48	50	2	-	-	-	-	-
No children ages 6-18	832	%	51	45	4	-	-	-	-	-
Education										
Less than high school	207	%	32	64	4	147	%	45	52	4
High school graduate	432	%	49	47	4	428	%	53	45	2
Some college	286	%	62	35	3	324	%	63	37	1
Four year college graduate	328	%	67	31	2	222	%	71	29	1
Marital Status										
Married or have been married	993	%	48	48	4	-	-	-	-	-
Never married	260	%	59	40	2	-	-	-	-	-
Race										
White	1054	%	51	46	3	1093	%	56	42	2
Black	115	%	42	51	7	96	%	57	38	5
Hispanic	88	%	47	47	7	65	%	42	58	-
Religion										
Protestant	730	%	49	47	4	666	%	54	44	2
Catholic	376	%	47	50	3	284	%	53	45	1
White born-again Christian	185	%	31	66	3	250	%	39	59	2
Political Philosophy										
Conservative	434	%	42	57	1	459	%	51	47	2
Middle-of-the-road	490	%	55	40	5	516	%	57	41	2
Liberal	277	%	56	39	5	238	%	62	38	*

(Continued)

Table 25 (Continued)

FAVOR OR OPPOSE 1973 SUPREME COURT DECISION ON ABORTION
BY SOME KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

	September 1985					January 1985				
	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Party Identification										
Republican	401	%	49	48	3	384	%	56	43	1
Democrat	456	%	48	47	5	454	%	55	43	2
Independent	321	%	58	40	2	365	%	58	40	2
Age										
18-29 years	355	%	51	47	2	395	%	60	40	1
30-49 years	224	%	57	40	3	502	%	58	40	2
50-64 years	156	%	43	50	7	214	%	46	50	4
65 and over	156	%	41	56	3	141	%	54	44	2
Sex										
Male	606	%	51	45	3	624	%	59	40	2
Female	651	%	48	48	4	630	%	53	45	3
Region										
East	312	%	54	41	5	312	%	60	38	2
Midwest	311	%	48	51	1	311	%	48	48	4
South	388	%	42	53	6	387	%	52	46	2
West	246	%	61	38	2	244	%	66	32	2
Area										
Central city	379	%	54	43	3	383	%	59	39	3
Rest of metropolitan area	575	%	53	44	4	571	%	59	38	2
Outside metropolitan area	303	%	40	56	4	300	%	46	52	1

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 26

CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH ABORTION SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE

Q.: Please tell me for each circumstance whether you think abortion should be available or should not be available.

Base: 1253	Should Be Available %	Should Not Be Available %	Not Sure %
If the woman's life would be in danger from the pregnancy	90	7	2
If the woman's physical health would be endangered from the pregnancy	83	15	2
If the pregnancy is due to rape or incest	82	14	4
If the woman's mental health would be endangered from the pregnancy	71	26	3
If there is a likelihood that the child will be deformed or retarded	67	29	4
If the woman is an unmarried teenage girl whose future life might be seriously affected	56	41	3
If the child would be unwanted and unloved	46	50	3
If the woman would have to go on welfare if she had the child	42	55	3

Table 27

PERCENTAGE WHO KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS HAD AN ABORTION

Q.: Do you know anyone who has had an abortion?

Q.: Is that person close to you, or not?

	Base		Know Someone Who Has Had an Abortion: Yes, Know	Yes, Know More Than One	No, Do Not Know	Not Sure	Know Someone Close Who Has Had an Abortion: Close	Not Close	Not Sure
Total	1257	%	42	7	50	1	28	21	1
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18									
Have children ages 6-18	423	%	42	7	44	1	32	22	1
No children ages 6-18	832	%	40	7	53	1	26	20	1
Education									
Less than high school	207	%	23	6	70	1	17	11	1
High school graduate	432	%	42	5	52	1	27	20	*
Some college	286	%	57	10	32	1	39	26	1
Four year college graduate	328	%	57	9	34	*	34	31	1
Marital Status									
Married or have been married	993	%	40	6	53	1	25	20	1
Never married	260	%	52	10	38	*	37	24	*
Race									
White	1054	%	44	6	49	1	28	21	1
Black	115	%	29	13	58	*	26	15	1
Hispanic	88	%	48	7	45	-	29	24	2
Religion									
Protestant	730	%	41	6	52	1	26	20	1
Catholic	376	%	39	7	54	*	25	21	*
White born-again Christian	185	%	38	4	57	1	22	19	1
Political Philosophy									
Conservative	434	%	40	7	52	1	26	21	*
Middle-of-the-road	490	%	44	7	48	1	28	23	1
Liberal	277	%	48	5	46	1	34	18	1
Party Identification									
Republican	401	%	48	5	45	1	29	25	1
Democrat	456	%	35	6	58	1	23	17	1
Independent	321	%	47	9	43	1	32	23	1
Age									
18-24 years	180	%	55	10	34	*	39	26	-
25-29 years	175	%	55	11	33	1	46	19	*
30-49 years	511	%	49	7	44	1	30	25	1
50-64 years	224	%	32	4	62	2	18	16	1
65 and over	156	%	20	5	76	-	10	13	1
Sex									
Male	606	%	39	7	54	*	24	22	*
Female	651	%	46	7	47	1	32	20	1

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 28

WHETHER ABORTION WILL BE OUTLAWED AGAIN OR REMAIN LEGAL

Q.: Do you think that abortion will ever be outlawed in the U.S. again, or do you think it will continue to be legal?

	Base		Will Be Outlawed Again	Will Continue to Be Legal	Not Sure
Total	1257	%	19	74	7
Education					
Less than high school	207	%	24	66	10
High school graduate	432	%	19	75	6
Some college	286	%	15	79	6
Four year college graduate	328	%	17	77	6
Race					
White	1054	%	20	73	7
Black	115	%	14	77	9
Hispanic	88	%	20	72	8
Religion					
Protestant	730	%	18	73	8
Catholic	376	%	23	72	5
White born-again Christian	185	%	27	66	7
Political Philosophy					
Conservative	434	%	22	72	5
Middle-of-the-road	490	%	16	73	9
Liberal	277	%	20	75	4
Party Identification					
Republican	401	%	19	74	8
Democrat	456	%	20	74	7
Independent	321	%	19	76	9
Age					
18-24 years	180	%	15	82	3
25-29 years	175	%	16	81	2
30-49 years	511	%	20	75	6
50-64 years	224	%	21	68	11
65 and over	156	%	22	64	14
Region					
East	312	%	20	75	9
Midwest	311	%	22	71	7
South	388	%	21	71	8
West	246	%	11	82	7

Table 29

AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE ABOUT ABORTIONS

Q.: Now let me read you some statements that have been made about abortions. For each tell me if you agree or disagree.

	Agree %	Disagree %	Not Sure %
Any woman who is three months or less pregnant should have the right to decide, with her doctor's advice, whether or not she wants to have an abortion	67	32	1
To perform an abortion, even during the first three months of pregnancy, is the equivalent of murder, because a fetus' life has been eliminated	55	42	3
A woman should be able to decide on her own whether or not she has an abortion	63	35	2
The life of a baby is just as important as the life of a mother, so abortions should be banned	46	49	5

Table 30

A PROFILE OF THE HARDCORE PRO- AND ANTI-ABORTION GROUPS AND THE SWING GROUP

	Base		Hardcore Pro-Abortion	Swing Group	Hardcore Anti-Abortion
Total	1257	%	30	49	21
Region					
East	312	%	32	49	19
Midwest	311	%	26	47	27
South	388	%	27	51	21
West	246	%	36	51	13
Education					
Less than high school	207	%	14	61	25
High school graduate	432	%	26	53	21
Some college	286	%	43	40	17
Four year college graduate	328	%	50	34	16
Sex					
Male	606	%	32	48	20
Female	651	%	28	50	21
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18					
Have children aged 6-18	423	%	25	53	22
No children aged 6-18	832	%	32	48	20
Income					
$15,000 or less	316	%	20	58	22
$15,001-$25,000	293	%	30	49	22
$25,001-$35,000	248	%	34	46	20
$35,001-$50,000	178	%	40	44	17
$50,001 and over	136	%	51	28	20
Race					
White	1054	%	31	47	23
Black	115	%	31	60	9
Hispanic	88	%	17	67	16
Religion					
Protestant	730	%	31	50	19
Catholic	376	%	21	52	27
White born-again Christian	185	%	16	51	33
Political Philosophy					
Conservative	434	%	22	49	29
Middle-of-the-road	490	%	36	47	16
Liberal	277	%	36	53	12
Party Identification					
Republican	401	%	29	48	22
Democrat	456	%	28	53	19
Independent	321	%	36	45	19
Know Someone Close Who Has Had an Abortion	380	%	41	42	17

Table 31

HOW THE HARDCORE PRO- AND ANTI-ABORTION GROUPS AND THE SWING GROUP STAND ON THREE KEY QUESTIONS: THE SO-CALLED "SQUEAL LAW," THE 1973 SUPREME COURT DECISION, AND A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO BAN ABORTIONS

	Hardcore Pro-Abortion	Swing Group	Hardcore Anti-Abortion
Base	376	620	260
	%	%	%
"Squeal Law"			
Favor	35	54	56
Oppose	63	42	38
1973 Supreme Court Decision on Abortion			
Favor	83	46	11
Oppose	16	48	88
Constitutional Ban on Abortion			
Favor	11	37	74
Oppose	85	51	21

Table 32

FAVOR ABORTION UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, SOME CIRCUMSTANCES, OR NO CIRCUMSTANCES

Q.: In general, do you favor permitting a woman who wants one to have an abortion in all circumstances, some circumstances, or no circumstances?

			Abortions Should Be Available Under:			
	Base		All Circum-stances	Some Circum-stances	No Circum-stances	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	26	53	20	1
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18						
Have children ages 6-18	403	%	27	55	17	1
No children ages 6-18	847	%	25	52	21	2
Education						
Less than high school	171	%	14	49	35	2
High school graduate	471	%	23	59	17	1
Some college	283	%	33	52	14	1
Four year college graduate	325	%	43	48	9	1
Marital Status						
Married or have been married	902	%	24	54	21	2
Never married	288	%	32	52	15	1
Race						
White	1073	%	27	54	18	1
Black	100	%	22	48	29	2
Hispanic	80	%	14	54	29	3
Religion						
Protestant	748	%	24	55	20	1
Catholic	338	%	21	55	21	3
White born-again Christian	183	%	12	54	32	2
Political Philosophy						
Conservative	473	%	23	55	20	2
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	28	58	14	1
Liberal	273	%	31	47	21	1
Party Identification						
Republican	400	%	25	53	21	1
Democrat	420	%	24	55	20	2
Independent	345	%	29	53	16	1
Age						
18-24 years	200	%	28	53	18	-
25-29 years	182	%	31	54	15	-
30-49 years	401	%	28	56	15	1
50-64 years	244	%	22	55	22	1
65 and over	159	%	19	44	30	6
Sex						
Male	614	%	27	52	19	2
Female	639	%	24	54	20	1
Know Someone Close Who Has Had an Abortion	409	%	36	48	15	1

Table 33

WHETHER ABORTION IS MORAL, IMMORAL, OR NOT A QUESTION OF MORALITY

Q.: Do you think that abortion is moral, or immoral, or is it not a question of morality?

	Base		Moral	Immoral	Not a Question of Morality	Not Sure
Total	2510	%	8	37	50	6
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18						
Have children ages 6-18	826	%	7	40	49	4
No children ages 6-18	1679	%	8	36	50	6
Education						
Less than high school	378	%	7	48	37	11
High school graduate	903	%	7	38	53	3
Some college	569	%	8	33	56	3
Four year college graduate	653	%	9	29	56	5
Marital Status						
Married or have been married	1955	%	7	40	47	6
Never married	548	%	10	28	58	4
Race						
White	2127	%	7	38	49	5
Black	215	%	7	32	51	10
Hispanic	166	%	11	35	50	3
Religion						
Protestant	1478	%	7	38	49	7
Catholic	714	%	9	43	44	4
White born-again Christian	368	%	6	62	29	3
Political Philosophy						
Conservative	907	%	8	45	43	4
Middle-of-the-road	943	%	7	34	54	5
Liberal	550	%	9	30	56	5
Party Identification						
Republican	801	%	7	40	48	5
Democrat	876	%	9	40	45	5
Independent	667	%	8	33	59	5
Age						
18-24 years	380	%	9	28	60	4
25-29 years	357	%	9	32	56	3
30-49 years	972	%	6	35	54	4
50-64 years	468	%	9	42	41	8
65 and over	215	%	6	50	34	9
Sex						
Male	1220	%	8	35	51	5
Female	1289	%	7	39	48	6
Region						
East	623	%	8	35	52	5
Midwest	624	%	8	37	52	4
South	775	%	8	43	42	7
West	488	%	6	32	58	5
Know Someone Close Who Has Had an Abortion	789	%	6	30	61	3

Table 34

SEEN, HEARD, OR READ ANYTHING ABOUT "THE SILENT SCREAM"?

Q.: Have you seen, heard, or read anything about a film or television program called "The Silent Scream"?

Q.: Have you yourself seen the film or television program called "The Silent Scream?"

	Base		Have Seen, Heard, or Read About "The Silent Scream"	Say They Actually Have Seen "The Silent Scream"
Total	1253	%	42	14
Have or Do Not Have Children Ages 6-18				
Have children ages 6-18	403	%	41	12
No children ages 6-18	847	%	43	15
Education				
Less than high school	171	%	20	9
High school graduate	471	%	41	14
Some college	283	%	59	17
Four year college graduate	325	%	63	17
Marital Status				
Married or have been married	902	%	42	14
Never married	288	%	45	14
Race				
White	1073	%	45	14
Black	100	%	23	8
Hispanic	80	%	40	14
Religion				
Protestant	748	%	40	12
Catholic	338	%	47	17
White born-again Christian	183	%	48	19
Political Philosophy				
Conservative	473	%	40	14
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	48	14
Liberal	273	%	42	13

(Continued)

Table 34 (Continued)

SEEN, HEARD, OR READ ANYTHING ABOUT "THE SILENT SCREAM"?

	Base		Have Seen, Heard, or Read About "The Silent Scream"	Say They Actually Have Seen "The Silent Scream"
Party Identification				
Republican	400	%	46	12
Democrat	420	%	39	14
Independent	346	%	43	15
Age				
18-24 years	200	%	47	16
25-29 years	182	%	42	16
30-49 years	401	%	49	14
50-64 years	244	%	41	12
65 and over	159	%	24	9
Sex				
Male	614	%	41	13
Female	639	%	43	14
Region				
East	311	%	45	15
Midwest	313	%	47	15
South	387	%	33	11
West	242	%	50	16

Table 35

WHETHER SEEING "THE SILENT SCREAM" MADE VIEWERS
MORE IN FAVOR OF OR OPPOSED TO ABORTION

(Base: Those who say they have seen "The Silent Scream")

Q.: Did seeing "The Silent Scream" make you more in favor of abortion, more opposed to abortion, or did it not affect your views on abortion?

Base	185
	%
Made more in favor or abortion	5
Made more opposed to abortion	45
Did not affect views	48
Not sure	2

Table 36

WHETHER VIEWERS THINK "THE SILENT SCREAM"
WAS MOSTLY OBJECTIVE, OR BIASED

(Base: Those who say they have seen "The Silent Scream")

Q.: Did you think that "The Silent Scream" was mostly objective, or did you think it was biased?

Base	185
	%
Mostly objective	39
Biased	56
Not sure	5

CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC ATTITUDES ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL OVERSEAS

These final question measured public awareness about overpopulation as a cause of food shortages in developing countries, and support for U.S. assistance to family planning programs in developing countries.

Awareness of Overpopulation as a Cause of Food Shortages

There is a high degree of awareness among Americans that overpopulation in developing countries is a major cause of food shortages. Two-thirds (68%) of the public believe overpopulation is a major cause of food shortages, 19% believe it is a minor cause, 10% believe it is not a cause at all, and 2% are not sure (Table 37). Fewer blacks (55%) and people who did not finish high school (61%) believe that overpopulation is a major cause of food shortages overseas.

The Balance of Opinion on the U.S. Providing Assistance for Birth Control Programs in Developing Countries

The survey provides two measures of public support for U.S. aid for family planning programs in developing countries. The first measure shows the proportion who favor or oppose this type of assistance. The second measure placed a key qualifier on this same question: it shows the proportion who favor and oppose family planning assistance for developing countries which also provide abortions for their citizens.

At a 1984 conference in Mexico City on international population control, the U.S. delegation proposed to end U.S. assistance for family planning programs to countries which provide abortion services to their citizens. This would mean an end to aid for contraception and family planning counseling if the government of a country provides abortion services. The U.S. already gives no aid to pay specifically for abortions in other countries.

An overwhelming majority of Americans (78%) favor the U.S. helping with birth control in the developing nations. Nineteen percent oppose this type of aid, and 3% are not sure (Table 38).

Support for birth control aid is 15 to 18 points higher among people with some college education or a bachelor's degree than among people who did not finish high school. Eighty-five percent of four-year college graduates favor aid for birth control programs, compared to 67% of those with less than a high school diploma. But 67% is still substantial majority support.

The size of the majorities who favor this type of aid also vary substantially by age. Two-thirds (65%) of people aged 65 and over support this type of aid. More than 8 in 10 people aged 18-29 favor it. And more women (80%) than men (75%) favor U.S. aid overseas for birth control programs.

But the level of support drops from this overwhelming 4 to 1 majority to a still substantial 2 to 1 majority in favor when the public is asked if they favor or oppose "the U.S. providing assistance for governments in developing countries for birth control programs even if they also have abortion programs." Sixty-one percent favor aid, 35% oppose it, and 4% are not sure (Table 39). Opposition doubles in proportion from the first measure because of the mention of abortion services in these countries.

And two groups whose opinions have differed from those of the majority throughout this survey once against differ on this question: white born-again Christians and people over aged 50 are split on the question of U.S. aid to countries which have abortion services. Fifty-two percent of white born-again Christians favor it, 42% oppose it, and 6% are not sure. Fifty percent of those aged 50 and over favor aid, 45% oppose it, and 5% are not sure.

Observation:

Introducing the notion of a country offering abortion services cuts support for U.S. funding of birth control programs from a 4-to-1 to a 2-to-1 majority. The net result is still a commanding mandate to provide such funding. More than half of even white born-again Christians favor it.

Table 37

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT OVERPOPULATION AS A
CAUSE OF FOOD SHORTAGES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Q.: From what you have read or heard, in the developing countries is overpopulation a major cause of food shortages, a minor cause, or not a cause at all?

	Base		A Major Cause	A Minor Cause	Not a Cause at All	Not Sure
Total	1253	%	68	19	10	3
Education						
Less than high school	171	%	61	21	11	7
High school graduate	471	%	70	17	11	2
Some college	283	%	73	18	8	1
Four year college graduate	325	%	71	21	8	2
Race						
White	1073	%	70	18	9	3
Black	100	%	55	21	19	5
Hispanic	80	%	63	21	11	5
Political Philosophy						
Conservative	473	%	71	16	11	2
Middle-of-the-road	453	%	70	19	8	2
Liberal	273	%	63	22	11	4
Religion						
Protestant	748	%	70	18	9	3
Catholic	338	%	64	23	10	3
White born-again Christian	183	%	70	17	9	4

Table 38

FAVOR OR OPPOSE THE U.S. HELPING WITH BIRTH CONTROL
IN THE DEVELOPING NATIONS

Q.: Do you favor or oppose the U.S. helping with birth control in the developing nations?

	Base		Favor U.S. Helping	Oppose U.S. Helping	Not Sure
Total	2510	%	78	19	3
Region					
East	623	%	79	18	3
Midwest	624	%	80	17	3
South	775	%	73	23	5
West	488	%	80	18	2
Education					
Less than high school	378	%	67	24	5
High school graduate	903	%	77	19	4
Some college	569	%	82	16	2
Four year college graduate	653	%	85	13	2
Race					
White	2127	%	78	19	4
Black	215	%	73	23	4
Hispanic	166	%	80	18	2
Religion					
Protestant	1478	%	78	19	4
Catholic	714	%	75	22	3
White born-again Christian	368	%	73	21	6
Political Philosophy					
Conservative	907	%	76	22	2
Middle-of-the-road	943	%	81	16	3
Liberal	550	%	81	17	3
Party Identification					
Republican	801	%	77	20	3
Democrat	876	%	77	19	4
Independent	667	%	80	18	2
Age					
18-24 years	380	%	86	13	1
25-29 years	377	%	83	15	2
30-49 years	972	%	81	17	2
50-64 years	468	%	71	23	6
65 and over	315	%	65	29	6
Sex					
Male	1220	%	75	22	3
Female	1289	%	80	16	4

Table 39

FAVOR OR OPPOSE U.S. HELPING WITH BIRTH CONTROL IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THAT ALSO HAVE ABORTION PROGRAMS

Q.: Do you favor or oppose the U.S. providing assistance for governments in developing countries for birth control programs even if they also have abortion programs?

	Base		Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Total	1257	%	61	35	4
Region					
East	312	%	64	31	5
Midwest	311	%	58	38	4
South	388	%	60	38	3
West	246	%	63	34	4
Education					
Less than high school	207	%	51	45	5
High school graduate	432	%	59	38	4
Some college	386	%	71	25	4
Four year college graduate	328	%	72	26	2
Race					
White	1054	%	61	35	4
Black	115	%	62	35	3
Hispanic	88	%	61	34	6
Religion					
Protestant	730	%	61	35	4
Catholic	376	%	56	40	4
White born-again Christian	185	%	52	42	6
Political Philosophy					
Conservative	434	%	58	39	3
Middle-of-the-road	490	%	66	30	4
Liberal	277	%	65	32	3
Party Identification					
Republican	401	%	62	35	2
Democrat	456	%	60	37	4
Independent	321	%	64	30	6
Age					
18-24 years	180	%	72	27	1
25-29 years	175	%	74	25	1
30-49 years	511	%	62	33	4
50-64 years	224	%	51	42	7
65 and over	156	%	50	47	3
Sex					
Male	606	%	61	37	3
Female	651	%	61	34	5

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Louis Harris and Associates' telephone surveys are based on a national sample of the civilian population (18 years of age and older) of the United States. Those living in Alaska and Hawaii are not represented, nor are those in prisons, hospitals, or religious and educational institutions, unless such individuals have their own outside phone line. Samples are based on the Census Bureau's adult population figures for each state in the country. These figures are updated by intercensal estimates produced annually by the Census Bureau, and sample locations are selected biennially to reflect changes in the country's demographic and geographic profile.

National samples are stratified on two dimensions -- geographic region and metropolitan versus non-metropolitan residence. Stratification ensures that the sample will reflect, within 1%, those living in different regions of the country and those living in SMSA's and non-SMSA's. Within each stratum, the selection of the primary sampling unit (PSU) is achieved through multistage, unclustered sampling. Each PSU yields one interview. First states, then counties, and then minor civil divisions are selected, with probability of selection proportionate to Census Bureau estimates of their respective populations.

Random Digit Dialing

Louis Harris and Associates employs a random-digit-dialing procedure to select households within primary sampling units. Random digit dialing is a significant improvement over previously used techniques, extending the potential coverage rate to almost 95% of the U.S. population.

Unless some method of random digit dialing is used, telephone samples must be drawn directly from published lists. However, since the population of unlisted phone number subscribers is large and demographically dissimilar to subscribers with listed phone numbers, reliance on telephone directories alone yields seriously biased samples. For this reason, using published phone listings as the universe is inadequate for telephone surveys and inferior to using random digit dialing.

The use of a random-digit-dialing method offers other important advantages:

-- The sample is highly representative.

-- Unlisted telephone numbers have the same probability of inclusion in the sample as listed numbers. This is particularly important in reaching both high income and minority populations.

-- Respondents are geographically dispersed, rather than clustered.

-- Households with multiple phone listings have the same probability of inclusion in the sample as households with a single phone listing.

Sample Development

Virtually all of the hundreds of national telephone surveys conducted by the Harris organization each year are based on a modified, stratified, random-digit-dialing method. In addition, Harris telephone surveys use a stratified area-probability approach rather than a single-stage sample.

There are three important advantages to using an area-probability approach:

-- It allows greater stratification of the population (Harris samples have twelve strata).

-- It allows comparisons with Census Bureau data and other published demographic information that have a geographic base.

-- It is compatible with sampling for in-person interviewing, thus providing greater versatility in study design.

The sample is developed in a multistage process. First, a listing is constructed of the latest estimates of the adult population of every state within each region in rank order, then a running cumulative total of gross sums is produced. Next, a skip factor is calculated as t/n, where t is the adult population of the stratum and n is the number of sample points needed. Then a random number, ψ , smaller than the skip factor, is selected. Beginning with the random number ψ , the sample points are then assigned according to where the numbers ψ, $(\psi + t/n)$, $(\psi + 2\ t/n)$, $(\psi + 3\ t/n)$... $(\psi + (n-1)\ t/n)$ fall on the running cumulative total of the adult population within that stratum. This same procedure is applied to each state within each region to form PSU's.

At the next stage of selection, one telephone number for each PSU is randomly selected from the updated Harris library of telephone directories. The selected numbers are then altered by dropping the last two digits (or occasionally the last digit in rural areas) and replacing them with randomly selected two-digit numbers. As many randomly selected two-digit numbers as needed are successively appended until a working residential number is reached or until an interview is completed in each PSU. Technically, this method of sampling produces an epsem sample of all published banks.

Stratification of Telephone Sample

The core telephone exchanges are stratified by two variables -- geographic region and place of residence. The United States is divided into four regions, as follows:

1. East: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, and West Virginia.

2. South: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma.

3. Midwest: Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota.

4. West: Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, California, Oregon, and Washington.

We also use three categories for place of residence:

1. Central City: Every place defined by the Census Bureau as a central city of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.

2. Rest of Metropolitan Area: Every place that is not a central city but is within SMSA boundaries.

3. Outside Metropolitan Area: Every place that is not included in any of the other two categories.

We then define each place of residence category within each region as a stratum.

Sample Reliability

In order to maintain reliability and integrity in the sample, the telephone field staff follows these procedures when a respondent contact is attempted:

-- A non-answering telephone is dialed two more times over a three-day period. At the end of this time, if no contact is made, a new telephone number is generated for that PSU.

-- If a business telephone is reached or if contact is made with a household in which a potential respondent presents a language barrier, a new telephone number is generated for that PSU.

-- Once a residential contact is established, the interviewer uses a respondent selection procedure to designate someone in the household for the interview.

Respondent Selection

Within each household contacted for the survey, the interviewer uses a respondent selection procedure to determine which adult member of the household will be interviewed. Under the standardized procedure, the interviewer asks for one of the following household members, in order of priority: (1) youngest adult male at home; (2) next youngest adult male at home; (3) youngest adult female at home; or (4) next youngest adult female at home. This procedure results in a good distribution of respondents by sex and age. It also avoids automatically accepting as a respondent the adult in the household who routinely answers the phone.

Callback Strategy

In order to attain the highest possible response rates within reasonable cost constraints, callbacks are made according to the following guidelines:

No Answer/Not-at-Homes: An initial call and then two callbacks to reach an adult member of the household. Callbacks are made on different days and at different times of the day. After the third call, the household is replaced by another number in that PSU.

Refusals: One callback to try to convert any designated respondent who has refused or terminated an interview. If after the conversion attempt the designated respondent still declines the interview, another household is selected in that PSU.

Unavailable Respondents: An initial call and two callbacks to reach the designated member of the household. If after the third call the respondent is still not available for the interview, another household is selected in that PSU.

Busy Signals: An initial call, a follow-up fifteen minutes later, and two callbacks to reach a member of the household. Callbacks are made on different days and at different times of the day. If the telephone is still busy after the fourth call, a new number is selected in that PSU and the household is replaced.

Weighting

All national public cross sections are weighted to the Census Bureau's latest population parameters on sex, race, age, and education. This adjusts these key variables, where necessary, to their actual proportions in the population. Only slight weighting is necessary in Harris samples.

All surveys tend to under-represent to some extent the most disadvantaged stratum of society due to the inherent difficulty of reaching them. Weighting of data by race and education serves to correct any such under-representation and to assure that final results are fully projectable.

Sampling Error

The results achieved from national public cross sections are subject to sampling error. Sampling error is defined as the difference between the results obtained from the sample and those that would have been obtained had the entire population been surveyed. The size of sampling error varies both with the size of the sample and with the percentage giving a particular answer. The following table sets forth the range of error in samples of different sizes at different percentages of response:

RECOMMENDED ALLOWANCE FOR
SAMPLING ERROR OF PROPORTIONS
(PLUS OR MINUS)

Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence Level)
To Use in Evaluating Any Individual Percentage Result

Approximate Sample Size of Any Group Asked Question on Which Survey Result Is Based	Approximate Magnitude of Results				
	Survey Percentage Result at 10% or 90%	Survey Percentage Result at 20% or 80%	Survey Percentage Result at 30% or 70%	Survey Percentage Result at 40% or 60%	Survey Percentage Result at 50%
1,250	2	2	3	3	3
1,000	2	2	3	3	3
500	3	4	4	4	4
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14

For example, if the response for a sample size of 1,000 is 30%, in 95 cases out of 100 the response in the total population would be between 27% and 33%.

Note that survey results based on subgroups of small size can be subject to large sampling error. For example, the results based on the number of Hispanics in a sample could be subject to a sampling error of up to ±12.

The recommended allowances for sampling error were calculated based on a simple random sample.

Significance of Difference Between Proportions

The difference between the percentage responses given by two independent samples to the same question may or may not be significant. To determine whether or not such a difference is indeed significant, the size of the samples involved and the percentage giving each response must be taken into account. The following table shows the margin of error that must be allowed for different sample sizes at different percentages of response:

SAMPLING ERROR OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROPORTIONS

Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence Level)
To Use in Evaluating Differences Between Two Percentage Results

Approximate Sample Size of Two Groups Asked Question on Which Survey Results Are Based	Approximate Magnitude of Results				
	Survey Percentage Results at 10% or 90%	Survey Percentage Results at 20% or 80%	Survey Percentage Results at 30% or 70%	Survey Percentage Results at 40% or 60%	Survey Percentage Results at 50%
1,250 vs. 1,250	2	3	4	4	4
1,000	2	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	5	5	5
300	4	5	6	6	6
200	4	6	7	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14
1,000 vs. 1,000	3	4	4	4	4
500	3	4	5	5	5
300	4	5	6	6	6
200	5	6	7	7	8
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	9	11	13	14	14
500 vs. 500	4	4	6	6	6
300	4	6	7	7	7
200	6	7	8	8	8
100	7	9	10	11	11
50	9	12	13	14	15
300 vs. 300	5	6	7	8	8
200	5	7	8	9	9
100	7	9	10	11	11
50	9	12	14	15	15
200 vs. 200	6	8	9	10	10
100	7	10	11	12	12
50	9	12	14	15	15
100 vs. 100	8	11	13	14	14
50	10	14	16	17	17
50 vs. 50	12	16	18	19	20

For example, suppose one group of size 1,000 has a response of 34% "yes" for a question, and an independent group of size 300 has a response of 27% "yes" for the same question, for a difference of 7 percentage points. According to the table, this difference is subject to a potential sampling error of plus or minus 6 percentage points. Since the observed difference is greater than the potential sampling error, the observed difference is significant. Moreover, if the entire population were interviewed, the difference would be from 1 to 13 percentage points (the 7-point observed difference plus or minus the 6-point potential sampling error) in 95 cases out of 100.

The recommended allowances for significance of difference were calculated based on a simple random sample.

Sampling error is only one way in which survey findings may vary from the findings that would result from interviewing every adult member of the population. Survey research is susceptible to human and mechanical errors as well, such as interviewer recording and data handling errors. However, the procedures used by the Harris firm keep errors of this kind to a minimum.

DISPOSITION OF ALL TELEPHONE NUMBERS CALLED FOR THE SURVEY

	August Wave I	September Wave II
Completed Interviews	1,253	1,257
Reached but Not Completed		
Respondent refused altogether	809	936
Respondent terminated interview once begun	129	84
Callbacks Incomplete		
Callback agreed to, but respondent could not complete it by the end of field period	370	316
No Reachable Respondent		
Never any answer	1,127	1,172
Always busy	99	256
Phone number not in service	1,652	1,540
Phone number is a business	443	398
Unavailable due to language; no English-speaker in household	78	83
Everyone reported to be unavailable due to health	76	76
Everyone reported to be unavailable during duration of the field period	119	100
Ineligible -- no respondent of eligible age in household	21	15
Ineligible -- quota for that sex filled	56	197
Miscellaneous		
Duplicate numbers, etc.	28	54
TOTAL OF TELEPHONE NUMBERS CALLED	6,260	6,484

STANDARD FORMULA FOR CALCULATION OF COMPLETION RATE:

$$\frac{\text{Completions}}{\text{Completions + Refusals + Terminations}} = \quad 57\% \qquad 55\%$$

PROFILE OF THE SAMPLES

	August - Wave I		September - Wave II	
	Unweighted Proportion in Sample %	Weighted Proportion in Sample %	Unweighted Proportion in Sample %	Weighted Proportion in Sample %
Total Adults				
Number	1,253	1,253	1,257	1,257
Percent	100%	100%	100%	100%
Region				
East	25	25	25	24
Midwest	25	25	25	26
South	31	33	31	32
West	19	17	20	18
Urbanism				
Central city	30	30	30	30
Rest of metropolitan area	46	45	46	44
Outside metropolitan area	24	25	24	27
Sex				
Male	49	48	48	48
Female	51	52	52	52
Race				
White	86	83	84	83
Black	8	11	9	11
Hispanic	6	6	7	6
Age				
18-24 years	16	17	14	17
25-29 years	15	13	14	12
30-49 years	37	35	41	35
50-64 years	19	19	18	18
65 and over	13	16	12	17
Education				
Not high school graduate	14	26	16	26
High school graduate	38	39	34	40
Some college	23	17	23	18
Four-year college graduate	26	17	26	17